HIS EXISTENCE *and* HIS NATURE

A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies

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ST. BENEDICT'S ABBEY
MOUNT ANGEL. ORB.

Volume I

"The first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be at the same time affirmed and denied; this is based on the notion of being and non*being, and on this principle all others are based, as is stated by the Philosopher in the Fourth Book of his Metaphysics, ch. 3."

(St. Thomas, ***Summa Theo!.,*** Ia 2ae, q.94, a.2)

B. HERDER BOOK CO.,
15 & 17 SOUTH BROADWAY, ST. LOUIS, MO.,
AND
33 QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON, W. C.
1949

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Sixth Impression

Vaïi-Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton and New York

TO THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

THE SEAT OF WISDOM

AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE

AND FILIAL OBEDIENCE

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In a book entitled, *Le Sens Commun et la Philosophie de l'Gtre,* we have shown that common sense or natural reason is a rudimentary philosophy of being, opposed to the philosophy of ihc phenomenon and to that of becoming; that being and the principles implied in it constitute the formal, primary and adequate object of common sense.

Here we again take up the study of these first principles, not m› much as they are concerned with the functioning of the faculty of common sense, but with reference to the classical proofs for God's existence. We have set ourselves the task of demonstrating the necessity of these principles, their dependence upon the first principle, and their ontological and transcendent validity. It will be seen that the proofs for God's existence rest ultimately upon the principle of identity or of non-contradiction, their proximate basis being the principle of sufficient reason, and their immediate basis the principle of causality. Each of the proofs will establish clearly the fact that the principle of identity, which is the supreme law of thought, must be at the same time the supreme law of reality; that the reality which is fundamental must be absolutely identical with itself; that it must be to "being" as A is to A, the self-subsisting Being; consequently, it must be essentially distinct from the world, which on its part is essentially composite and subject to change. Hence the alternative: either the true God or radical absurdity.

The fundamental ideas of the first part of this work were set forth in 1910, in an article entitled "Dieu," written for the "Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique." This article has been revised, recast, and more fully developed on a number of points. Particularly has the terminology of the Vatican Council's definition in reference to the demonstrability of the existence of

God been explained by the corresponding proposition of the Antimodernist Oath. The proofs establishing the ontological and transcendental validity of the primary ideas, as also the various formulas of the principle of identity, the defence of the absolute necessity of the principles of sufficient reason, of causality, and of finality have been presented more clearly and extensively. On these various questions we have made every effort to answer the difficulties raised. The proof based on the order prevailing in the universe has been slightly modified in reference to the question of chance.

The second part, which treats of the nature of God and of His attributes is almost completely new. We have made every effort to solve the antinomies of the Agnostics, basing our argument upon the Thomistic doctrine of analogy. To set forth the purport and scope of this doctrine, which is an application of mitigated realism, it seemed necessary for us to attack, on the one hand, the Nominalism of the Agnostics, especially that of Maimonides, and, on the other, the exaggerated Realism which Duns Scotus did not sufficiently avoid. This was necessary in order to safeguard the absolute simplicity of God.

We have devoted the second-last chapter to a critical examination of certain antinomies very difficult to solve, namely, those which concern free will. How can we reconcile the freedom of the will with the principle of sufficient reason, the foundation upon which the proofs for God's existence ultimately rest? How can we reconcile the liberty of God with His immutability and His wisdom? How the liberty of man with the fact that all things are set in motion by God?

Our conclusion with regard to God's ineffability and the absurdity of the unknowable brings out clearly all that we have maintained both in the theoretical and the practical order of the inevitable alternative developed throughout this work: either the true God or positive absurdity.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The first two editions of this work, printed in 1914 and published in 1915, were quickly sold out, in spite of the difficulties caused by the war. During the four years which have elapsed since, few works have appeared on this subject, and hence we have not much to add or to modify in this third edition.

However, for the more difficult questions, we have here and there quoted more freely from St. Thomas passages which throw additional light upon the subject. Various pages have been modified for the special purpose of giving a clearer explanation of the proper cause of individual and transitory effects as well as that of universal and permanent effects, and also so as to determine more closely the nature of the free act in God and to give a more exact demonstration of the possibility of miracles.[1]

We could have eliminated some abstract discussions, which refer to the objections of contemporary Agnostics; but our purpose here *was not to exhaust the objection,* but to establish as soundly and precisely as possible what are the *immediate data of the intelligence* which constitute the basis of our rational certainty of God's existence.

Some readers requested us to translate the Latin quotations, since a good understanding of them is difficult without being well versed in Scholastic terminology. We have done this in some cases; but on the whole it was necessary to stick to the original, which, for the rest, is explained by the context.[2]

We have been particularly careful in the use of terms. Every

[1] These changes are to be found in nos. 9, 50 B, 52 D, 62.

[2] In the English translation an attempt has been made to give a faithful rendering of these Latin quotations.—Tr.

science has its special terminology. We find this to be so in mathematics, in physics, and in biology; it is the same for philosophy and theology. If we wish to avoid the abuse of circumlocution, we must employ special terms to designate the concepts which are more distinct than those of common experience. That is why we have retained the technical terms, especially where, concerning the existence and nature of God, we explain what it is that distinguishes Nominalism, Conceptualism, and Pantheistic Realism, from that traditional realism the truth of which we demonstrate. The fundamental question is, whether God is merely a name, or an idea, or the universal being of all things. Is He truly *the One who is,* infinitely superior by reason of His absolute simplicity and immutability to the world of corporeal and incorporeal beings—a world which is essentially composite and subject to change?

We have added by way of appendices a critical inquiry into certain special difficulties, which have been submitted to us since the publication of the first edition.[3] The difficulties follow the order of subjects discussed in this work and refer to such questions as these:

Concerning the proofs of God's existence: I. The synthesis of the Thomistic proofs for God's existence and the notion of the proper cause. II. The validity of the principles of inertia and conservation of energy.

Concerning the distinction between God and the world: III. The simplicity of the analogical notion of being. IV. The various forms of Pantheism refuted by St. Thomas.

Concerning Providence and divine causality: V. St. Thomas and Neomolinism. A synthesis of the teaching of St. Thomas is given on these questions.

A detailed exposition of these problems would have unduly impeded the progress of the demonstrations given in the course

[3] Only the second of these appendices was contained in the first two editions.

of this work. Moreover, we shall see that the discussion of these problems serves but to confirm our demonstrations. We would not have written the last of these appendices, if it had not been necessary in answer to the criticisms which we received, and this gave us an opportunity to synthesize the scattered teaching of St. Thomas on these great problems. May these closing pages, far from the noise of dispute, cause some souls to understand better the words of Our Lord: "If thou didst but know the gift of God." (John IV, io).

The first two editions lacked an alphabetical index of the subjects discussed and the principal authors quoted. The one now given, even though not detailed, will enable the reader to group together the various aspects of the same question, explained in different parts of the book.

May this book, in spite of its rather abstract character, give to those who read it that real joy which is the result of having seen the truth, and cause them to have a greater love for the Author of all goodness, in whom we must find our happiness. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. V, 8).

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

Two more appendices have been added in this fifth edition. The first is on "God Determining or Being Determined; there is no middle course." It is the conclusion of a controversy waged between 1925 and 1927, after the publication of my article on "Predeterminism" in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique.* The second is entitled: "The Foundation of the Real Distinction between Potency and Act, according to the Teaching of St. Thomas." This was written to answer the objections raised by M. L. Rougier in a recent book, in which he attacked the Christian faith and Thomism.

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PART I

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Concerning the knowledge of the existence of God that can be acquired by human reason we shall consider: i) What die Catholic Church teaches on this point; 2) That the ontological and transcendental values of our primary ideas establish the possibility of proving this existence; 3) The principal proofs for the existence of God.

CHAPTER I

What the Catholic Church Teaches About God's Existence and His Nature, and the Knowledge Which We Can Have of Him by Means of the Natural Light of Reason.

i. *The existence and nature of God as defined by the Vatican Council.*

"The Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church," declares the Vatican Council (Const. "Dei Filius," ch. i), "believes and confesses that there is one true and living God, Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth, almighty, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intellect, in will, and in every perfection; who, being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world, of supreme beatitude in and by Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things which, beside Himself, exist or are conceivable." (Abbot Butler's translation; *Vatican Council,* Vol. II).

The truths of our Catholic faith contained in this paragraph can be explained more fully by a résumé of the conclusions expressed by Vacant in his treatise entitled, *Etudes théologiques sur les constitutions du Concile du Vatican, d'après les Actes du Concile.*

The Council, having affirmed its belief in the existence of God, designating Him by the principal names which the Bible gives to Him, proceeds to discuss the nature of God and the constituent attributes of the divine essence. His eternity, His immensity, and His incomprehensibility imply that the Divine Essence is beyond time, space, and every creatural concept. *Eternity* means that in

God there neither is, nor can be, beginning, end, or change of any kind. The exclusion of any idea of succession, admitted by all theologians as an element included in the concept of eternity, though apparently not as yet a dogma of the Catholic faith, nevertheless is a certain truth, proximate to the faith.

The divine *immensity,* as defined by the Council, means that the substance of God is and must be wholly present to all creatures, conserving them in their mode of being, wherever they are.

The divine *incomprehensibility* means that God cannot be fully comprehended by anyone but Himself. The intuitive vision of God granted to the blessed in Heaven does not include such a plenitude of knowledge.

In defining that God is *infinite in every perfection,* the Council states precisely in what sense we are to understand the term "infinite." The ancient philosophers gave the name *infinite* to anything which had not yet received its complete determination. When the Catholic Church declares that God is infinite, she means, on the contrary, that He possesses all possible perfections, that there is no limit to His perfection, and no admixture of imperfection to be found in them, so that it is impossible to conceive anything that would render Him more perfect. By this definition the Council avoided Hegel's error, that the Infinite Being, comprising all possible perfections, is an ideal tending to realize itself, but incapable of ever becoming a reality. By adding the phrase, "in intellect and in will," the Council condemns the materialistic Pantheism which considers the Divinity as merely a blind and impersonal necessity, a sort of law of fatality without either intelligence or will.

As for the other perfections which may be attributed to God, and of which the Council makes no mention, they are simply those which imply no imperfection in their concept. All these absolute perfections *{simpliciter simplices,* as they are termed in theology) are identified in an absolutely simple eminence, of

which they constitute, as it were, the virtual aspects, and which is strictly and properly the *Deity.*

1. The distinction between God and the world, as defined by the Council. The meaning and import of this definition.

The Council then considers the question of the *distinction between God and the world.* The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had condemned the Pantheism of Amaury of Chartres as an absurdity rather than a heresy. The reappearance and spread of this error necessitated a more explicit and reasoned definition. The Council, therefore, defines the distinction between God and the world and indicates its principal proofs: *"Deus, qui cum sit una singularis, simplex omnino et incommutabilis substantia spiritualis, praedicandus est re et essentia a mundo distinctus;* God, being one sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world."

1) *God is unique by nature.* This means that the Divine Nature cannot be considered as a common note of any class of created beings nor be realized anywhere but in Him. The Divine Being is, therefore, really and essentially distinct from the world, in which there exists a multiplicity of genera, species, and individuals.

2) *God is absolutely simple.* This implies that the Divine Being is really and essentially distinct from the world, where we find beings that may be considered either as physical compounds (/. <?., corporeal beings whose constituent physical parts are really distinct from one another), or as metaphysical compounds essence potentially realizable and actual existence) ; or, lastly, we may view them as forming a logical compound (:. *e.,* as classified in the order of genus and specific difference).

3) *God is immutable.* Since everywhere on this earth we find the process of change in beings or the possibility of the same, the

unchangeableness of the Divine Being is another mark by which He is really and essentially distinguished from this world. The Council points out the precise nature of this distinction when it says: "really and essentially distinct from the world." It is not a distinction of the mind, nor a virtual distinction, such as exists between any two divine attributes; but it is a real distinction, in virtue of which God and the world are not one reality, but two separate realities. This distinction is not only real, as that between two individuals of the same species, but in addition to this it is also essential: God is distinct from the world by His essence.

The third canon of the Council is even more precise, condemning Pantheism in general, which views God as a substance immanent in the world, and finite things as the accidents of this substance. The canon reads: "If any one shall say that the substance and essence of God and of all things is one and the same; let him be anathema." Finally, this distinction is infinite. God is sufficient for Himself; "of supreme beatitude in and by Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things which, beside Himself, exist or are conceivable."

There are four canons that correspond to the doctrine contained in this paragraph from the Constitution *Dei Filius,* to wit:

First, the canon condemning atheism: "If anyone shall deny one true God, Creator and Lord of things visible and invisible; let him be anathema."

Secondly, the canon condemning Materialism: "If anyone shall not be ashamed to affirm that, except matter, nothing exists; let him be anathema."

Thirdly, the canon condemning the fundamental tenet of Pantheism: "If anyone shall say that the substance and essence of God and of all things are one and the same; let him be anathema."

Fourthly, the canon condemning the principal forms of Pantheism, namely: (i) Emanatistic Pantheism; (2) the essential

Pantheism of Schelling; (3) the essential Pantheism of the universal being. "If anyone shall say that finite things, both corporeal and spiritual, or at least spiritual, have emanated from the divine substance; or that the divine essence by the manifestation and evolution of itself becomes all things; or, lastly, that God is universal and indefinite being, which by determining itself constitutes the universality of things, distinct according to genera, species, and individuals; let him be anathema."

The theories of Rosmini condemned by decree of the Holy Office (14th Dec., 1887), and the teachings of Ontologism condemned 18th Sept., 1861, must be referred to this canon. Two of these latter propositions read: (1) "What we understand by the term *being* as applied to all things and without which they mean nothing to us, is the divine Being. (2) "Universals, objectively considered, are not really distinct from God." (Of. Denzinger, *Enchiridion,* nos. 1660 and 1661).

This, then, is the teaching of the Church on the existence of God, His nature, His essential attributes, and the distinction between Him and the world. With these doctrinal statements the Council associates those referring to the creation of the world and to Divine Providence: "This one only true God, of His own goodness and almighty power, not for the increase and acquirement of His own happiness, but to manifest His perfection by the blessings which He bestows on creatures, and with absolute freedom of counsel, created out of nothing from the very first beginning of time, both the spiritual and corporeal creature, to wit, the angelical and the mundane, and afterwards the human creature, as partaking in a sense of both, consisting of spirit and of body."

Concerning the Providence of God we read: "God protects and governs by His Providence all things which He hath made, 'reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly' (Wisd. VIII, 1). 'For all things are bare and open to

His eyes' (Heb. IV, 13), even those that are yet to be by the free action of creatures." (Const. *Dei Filius,* ch. 1).

It cannot, therefore, be maintained with Abelard that God cannot prevent evil (Denz., n. 375), or with Eckhard, that He wills not only what is good, but also somehow what is evil (Denz., n. 514). On this point a later decision tells us that it is impossible for God to will what is sinful; He can only permit it. (Denz., n. 816).

What the Church teaches about the divine mysteries properly called supernatural, such as the Holy Trinity, does not concern us here.

3. *Definition of the Vatican Council on the ability of human reason to knotu God with certainty. Condemned errors: Positivism, Traditionalism, Fideism, Kantian Criticism.*

The Vatican Council has also defined what can be known of God by the natural light of human reason. "The same Holy Mother Church," says the Council, "holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, may be known for certain by the natural light of human reason, by means of created things, 'for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made' (Rom. I, 20); but that it pleased His wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and the eternal decrees of His will to mankind by another, namely, the supernatural way." Canon I of this chapter reads: "If any one shall say that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be certainly known by the natural light of human reason through created things; let him be anathema." *(Dei Filius,* Ch. 2, Of Revelation).

To obtain the exact meaning of this definition and of the corresponding canon, we shall have to review the errors which the Council had in view. Since the first proposition of the Anti-modernist Oath contains the same terms as those used in this

definition of the Council, a comparison of the two paragraphs will enable us to determine the import of each term in the definition.

The preliminary memorandum distributed among the Fathers of the Council, together with the *schema* prepared by the Deputatio de Fide, included this declaration: "The definition that God can be certainly known by the light of natural reason, through the medium of created beings, as well as die canon corresponding to this definition, were deemed necessary, not only because of Traditionalism, but also because of the wide-spread error that die existence of God cannot be proved by any apodiede argument, and consequently that by no process of human reasoning can the certainty of it be established." (Cf. Vacant, *Etudes sur les Const, du Concile du Vatican,* p. 286, and Document VII, p. 610). Hence it is heretical to maintain, as do the atheists and the Positivists, that there is no way by which we can arrive at the knowledge of God, or to assert with the most advanced of die Traditionalists and Fideists, that we can know God only through revelation or by some positive teaching received by tradition.

In the condemnation of Fideism we can see clearly what is the mind of the Church on this point. Amongst the various propositions which the Congregation of the Index required the Abbé Bautain to accept, in 1840, was one which declared that ' human reasoning is of itself sufficient to prove with certainty the existence of God *(ratiocinatio Dei existentiam cum certitudine probare valet).* Faith, being a supernatural gift, presupposes revelation, and hence cannot be consistently invoked to prove the existence of God against an atheist." (Denzinger, n. 1622). From Augustine Bonnetty, who was likewise suspected of l idcism,[1] the same Congregation of the Index, on June it, 1855,

[1] In the letter sent along with these propositions by Father Modena, the Secrelary of the Congregation of the Index, to Monsignor Sacconi, papal nuncio in

demanded formal assent to four propositions, the second of which affirms that "human reasoning has the power to prove the existence of God with certainty *(ratiocinatio cum certitudine probare valet),* as well as the spirituality and liberty of the soul," while the fourth proposition declares that "the method employed by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and other Scholastics after them, does not lead to rationalism, nor can it be blamed for the fact that the contemporary philosophy of the schools drifted into Naturalism and Pantheism. Hence no one has the right to reproach these doctors and teachers for having employed this method, especially since they did so with the at least tacit approval of the Church." (Cf. Denz., nos. 1650-1652). There is no doubt that the Council in this definition and its corresponding canon condemned Fideism. But the question may be asked: "Is the Kantian doctrine also involved in this definition?"

Kant maintained that the speculative proofs for the existence of God are not convincing, that metaphysics is an impossibility, and that there are no other proofs for the existence of God except those of the practical or moral order, productive of *moral faith,* which is sufficiently certain, subjectively considered, but objectively considered, is insufficient. *(Critique of Practical Reason,* I, Bk. ii, ch. 5). We shall consider this proof later on. For the present we may say that the Vatican Council, in condemning Fideism and Traditionalism, also had in view the Kantian theory. This is clearly evident from the fact that the six amendments proposed for the suppression of the word *"certo"* in the definition were all rejected. "You know, very Reverend Fathers," replied Bishop Gasser in the report which he presented to the Council in the

Paris, it was stated that Bonnetty's attachment to the Holy Sec and to Catholic teaching was never suspected. The intention was not to pronounce any judgment declaring his "opinions erroneous, suspicious or dangerous," but only "to prevent tlie possible consequences, proximate or remote, which others might deduce from them, especially in matters of faith." It may be remarked that Bonnetty gave his full assent to the propositions submitted to him. [This footnote has been inserted with the author's permission.—Tr.]

name of the Deputatio de Fide, "what opinion has become prevalent in the minds of many through the teaching of the French encyclopedists and the foremost defenders of the critical philosophy in Germany; this widely spread opinion is none other than ihat the existence of God cannot be proved with full certainty, and that the arguments which have at all times been so highly regarded, are still open to discussion. As a result, religion has been despised as if it had no foundation. Moreover, in these latter days attempts have been made in various places to separate morality from all religion; this is said to be necessary because of the fear that, when a man has reached a certain age and perceives that there is nothing certain in religion, not even the existence of God, he may become a moral pervert. But you also know, very Reverend Fathers, what is the value of this moral education which does not receive its inspiration from the words of the Psalmist: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Ps. no, 9). (Cf. Vacant, *Const, du Concile,* pp. 301 and 657). See also *Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum Recentiorum, Collectio Lacensis,* Tomus VII, p. 130, and the condemnation of Hermes[2] (Denz., n. 1620), and Frohschammer (n. 1670).

The Scholastics had always considered as erroneous the opinion of those who denied the demonstrability, properly speaking, of God's existence. (Opinion of Peter d'Ailly and of Nicholas d'Autrecourt).[3] St. Thomas Aquinas qualifies this opinion as

[2] Hermes maintained that it cannot be proved that God is anything but an unchangeable substance, constituting a part of the world, yet distinct and separate from the changes that take place, all these occurring within Him as the sphere of their operations.

[3] See De Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy,* 4th ed., pp. 545-550. The condemned theses of Nicholas d'Autrecourt (Denz., n. 553-570) are representative of the Antischolastic movement of the Middle Ages, in which we detect the influence exerted by the Nominalism of Ockham, which led to scepticism. The denial of the objective validity of the principle of causality is one of the propositions condemned. Another is the assertion that the principle of contradiction may be

erroneous *{Contra Gent.,* I, ch. 12), and manifestly false *{De Veritate,* q. 10, art. 12). Duns Scotus *{In IV Sent.,* I, dist. 2, q. 3, n. 7), Banez, Molina, Suarez, and other theologians express themselves in similar terms.

4) *Explanation of the theological terms employed by the Council in the antimodernist oath.*

The oath prescribed by the Motu Proprio *"Sacrorum Antistitum,"* of September 1, 1910, is a profession of faith, which reproduces the same terms as used by the Council on this question, and defines them so clearly as to remove all possibility of a false interpretation.

The opening words of this oath are a profession of faith in God, the beginning and end of all things, whose existence can be known with certainty and even proved by the natural light of reason, through the medium of created things, or, in other words, by the visible works of creation, just as a cause is known and proved by its effects.

The foregoing is but a paraphrase of the Latin text, which reads as follows: *"Ego-----firmiter amplector ac recipio omnia ac singula, quae ab inerranti Ecclesiae magisterio definita, adserta, ac declarata sunt, praesertim ea doctrinae capita, quae hujus temporis erroribus directo adversantur. Ac primum quidem Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem, naturali rationis lumine per ea quae facta sunt, hoc est per visibilia creationis opera, tamquam causam per effectus, certo cognosci, adeoque demonstrari etiam posse, profiteor.* I [name], firmly hold as true and accept everything which the infallible teaching authority of the Church has defined, maintained, and declared, especially those points of doctrine which are directly contrary to

construed hypothetically as meaning that "if something exists, then something docs exist *{si aliquid est, aliquid est)'** (Ct. Dcnz., nos. 554 and 570).

the errors of the present time. And first of all I profess that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known for certain and proved by the natural light of reason, through the things which He has made, that is to say, through the visible works of His creation, just as the cause is made known to us by its effects."

That the possibility of proving the existence of God may receive its due emphasis, the Church distinguishes between: (1) the object to be known, namely, God, the beginning and end of all things *{Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem}*; (2) the efficient cause of this knowledge, which is the natural light of reason *{naturali rationis lumine)·,* (3) the means by which this knowledge is acquired, which is "the things which have been made," that is to say, the visible works of creation, just as a cause is known by its effects *{per ea quae jacta sunt, hoc est per visibilia creationis opera tamquam causam per effectus)·,* (4) the degree of certitude in this knowledge is expressed by the words, "can be known with certainty, and moreover even proved" *{certo cognosci adeoque demonstrari etiam)·,* (5) finally, the possibility of acquiring this knowledge is expressed by the word *"posse."*

1) *The object to be known:* "God, the beginning and end of all things," is expressed in practically the same words as are used by the Vatican Council in Chapter 2 of the Constitution *"Dei Tilius."*[4] This similarity of expression applies also to the corresponding canon, which is the first of the four attached to the second chapter of the Constitution. Strictly speaking, the opening words of the canon: *"Deum unum et verum, Creatorem et*

4 "Eadem sancta mater Ecclesia tenet et docet, Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem, naturali humanae rationis lumine e rebus creatis certo cognosci /•■use: the same holy mother the Church, holds and teaches, that God, the beginning and end of all things, can certainly be known from created things, by the natural light of human reason." (Denz., n. 1785).

Dominum nostrum: the one and true God, our Creator and Lord," read more like a profession of faith in dogmatic form.[8]

In the doctrinal explanation of this canon, as given by the spokesman of the Deputatio de Fide, we clearly see that what is defined is that man, by reason alone, can come to recognize God as his destined end, and consequently to realize what his principal obligations are towards Him. But, on the other hand, in giving to God the title of Creator, it was not the intention of the Council to define as a dogma of faith that creation in the strict sense of the term (which means *"ex nihilo* or from nothing") can be proved by the power of the reasoning faculty alone.[9] The mind of the Council on this point was to retain the same terms which Holy Scripture employs in designating the *"true God"* who is the beginning and end of all things, and especially of man.

This idea of the true God, which, as the Council states, can be acquired by human reason—in what precisely does it consist? On this point we may consult the Council's definition of the true God, as given in Chapter i of the Constitution *"Dei Filius,"* and also the canons corresponding to this chapter. In explaining this definition, it was pointed out above that the Council, in formulating it, had in view not only the refutation of Pantheism in general, but its various forms. In the enumeration of the various attributes that denote the true God, it was not the intention of the Council to define as a dogma of faith that all these attributes can be proved by reason alone; but the Council wished it to be understood that these attributes are all implicitly or

[8] *"Si quis dixerit, Deum unum et verum, Creatorem et Dominum nostrum, per ea quae facta sunt, naturali rationis humanae certo cognosci non posse: anathema sit;* If any one shall say that the one and true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known for certain through the tilings which have been made, by the natural light of reason, let him be anathema." (Denz., n. 1806).

[9] See Vacant, *op. cil.,* t. I, p. 309.

virtually[7] included in the formula that "God is the beginning and end of all things."

If these attributes and the refutation of Pantheism as heretical, were not implicitly or virtually included in the idea of God as acquired by reason, then this idea would not be an expression of the true God. To escape the charge of heresy it is not enough to admit, as some agnostics do, that by reason alone we can conclude with certainty as to the existence of God, but that we cannot conclude definitely that either transcendence, or immanence, or personality,[8] or infinity, or finiteness properly belong to Him.

Neither is it enough to say that the mind can form a concept of God in which it is a matter of indifference whether the attributes of transcendence, personality, infinity, or even their contraries, are included. We must admit that the human mind is capable of forming a concept of God which implicitly or virtually includes the distinctive attributes of the true God and the falsity of the contrary concepts, just as in argumentation a general principle includes the conclusions deduced from it. The Pantheistic concept of an immanent and impersonal God, the Panentheistic concept of an immanent and personal God (πάν èv τώ 0eô>), that of a transcendental but finite God held by some Empirics, must all evidently be classed among those that are false. In the formulation of the Antimodernist Oath it was considered suffi-

7 A note accompanying the *schema* presented by the Deputatio de Fide reads .r follows: "Although the word Creator has been inserted in the canon, it is not, therefore, defined that creation in the strict sense of the term can be proved by reason; but the Council adopted the same word that is found in the Scripture when recording this revealed truth, but with no added comment to determine the sense in which the term is used." (Sec Vacant, *Etudes sur le Concile du Vatican,* Vol. I, pp. 308 and 610; Vol. II, p. 440).

8 By the personality of God must be understood His subsistence, which is absolutely independent of the world's existence, His intelligence, His knowledge of Himself, His liberty.

cient if, in combating the errors of the present time, the same terms were retained as those used by the Vatican Council. Evidently it will not do to admit the possibility of knowing with certainty the existence of God, if we understand this as William James does,9 or, as we shall see later on, as Bergson and Le Roy do.

Is reason able to prove by explicit deduction the distinctive attributes of God, especially that of infinity? This point was not defined by the Vatican Council, nor is there any reference to it in the above-mentioned proposition of the Antimodernist Oath. But the S. Congregation of the Index in 1840 ordered Bautain to give his formal assent to a proposition which declared that not only the existence of God can be proved with certainty by reasoning, but also the infinity of His perfections *(ratiocinatio potest cum certitudine probare existentiam Dei et infinitatem perfectionum ejus;* Denz., n. 1622). If, indeed, human reason, can know God with certainty, not merely on the testimony of authority, but by its own light, it must be able to account for

9 On this point William James, in his book entitled, *A Pluralistic Universe,* writes as follows: "The theological machinery that spoke so livingly to our ancestors, with its finite age of (he world, its creation out of nothing, its juridical morality and eschatology, its relish for rewards and punishments, its treatment of God as an external contriver, an 'intelligent and moral governor,' sounds as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish religion. The vaster vistas which scientific evolutionism has opened, and the rising tide of social democratic ideals, have changed the type of our imagination, and the older monarchical theism is obsolete or obsolescent. The place of the divine in the world must be more organic and intimate. An external creator and his institutions may still be verbally confessed at church and in formulas that linger by their mere inertia, but the life is out of them, we avoid dwelling on them, the sincere heart of us is elsewhere. . . . The only opinions quite worthy of arresting our attention will fall within the general scope of what may roughly be called the pantheistic field of vision, the vision of God as the indwelling divine." In another passage William James admits with Hegel that this abandonment of traditional theism demands likewise that we depart from that commonly accepted method of reasoning which is based upon the principle of identity or non-contradiction. (See *Pluralistic Universe,* p. 198). In rejecting the objective and universal validity of the principle of non-contradiction, James proposes "to give up the word 'rational' altogether" (see p. 320).

this truth and for the falsity of the contrary doctrine, and one can hardly admit the true God, principle and end of all things, without being persuaded to acknowledge His right to the title of Creator and to deduce from this the conclusion that He must possess all the divine attributes enumerated by the Council.

2) What is implied in this principle of knowledge expressed in the words, *"naturali rationis lumine,"* which are also employed by the Vatican Council? It is evident that by "reason" the Council understands our natural faculty of perceiving the truth. In chapter 3 of the Constitution *"Dei Filius"* reason is placed in contrast with supernatural faith, since whatever we know with certainty to be true, is due to the intrinsic evidence of things, *"propter intrinsecam rerum veritatem rationis lumine perspectam,"* as perceived by the reasoning faculty, and not because of the authority of God, who may have revealed such a truth. The knowledge of God which can be acquired by the natural light of reason, is not merely a true knowledge, *i.e.,* conforming to the reality; but it is also a knowledge of truth for which we are able to give a reason; hence it is not simply a belief resting on the testimony of God, or on that of tradition, or on that of the human race. It is the result of rational evidence.

We must not confound this "natural light of reason" with conscience, the religious sense, or religious experience, of which the Modernists speak. The terminology of the Vatican Council, as well as that of later decrees, has eliminated the possibility of such confusion. Moreover, the encyclical *"Pascendi,"* as we shall have occasion to see later on, has given to these words a precise meaning.

Nor is it enough, as we have already remarked, to understand by "the natural light of reason" the practical reason of Kant. Such an interpretation would evidently be contrary to the teaching of the Council, for practical reason, as understood by Kant, does not adhere to objective truth because it perceives that truth,

but merely concludes that something is worthy of moral belief, even though objectively inadequate. *(Critique of Practical Reason,* I, Book ii, c. 5). The terms which we shall explain further down, show clearly that it was the intention of the Council to condemn this error as well as Traditionalism and Fideism.

3) The means by which this knowledge of God can be acquired is made known to us by the words, *"per ea quae facta sunt, hoc est per visibilia creationis opera, tamquam causam per effectus* (by the things which are made, that is to say, by the visible works of His creation, just as a cause is made known to us by its effects"). The canon of the Vatican Council simply contains the words, *"per ea quae facta sunt,"* whereas in the corresponding chapter the words *"e rebus creatis"* (from created things) have been added, with the following quotation from St. Paul: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made" (Rom. I, 20).

The question might be asked, whether the Antimodernist Oath adds any new declaration concerning this dogma of the faith defined by the Council, or whether it merely insists that the terms of the definition are to be understood in their natural sense, in order to avoid all danger of sophistry.

Would the words of the Council, "through the things that are made," and "from created things," be interpreted in their natural sense if they were explained simply as meaning that either created things are the occasion of this knowledge of God, or that on account of the practical demands of morality they appeal to us in this way, or that sensible or visible things are to be excluded from those created realities which enable us to conclude with certainty that there is a God?

The first question is prompted by the attitude of Cartesianism. It has been asked whether it is sufficient to admit that created things are the means by which we know God, because they are

occasional causes, in the sense that they awaken in us an inborn idea of God, and cause it to become conscious and clear. Some theologians (<?·£., Vacant in his work above-quoted, p. 296) held this view, though they admit that "the Council is entirely favorable to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and the majority of theologians," according to which our knowledge of God is essentially acquired, mediate, and attained by the medium of created things.10

We upheld the same view as Vacant in our article "Dieu," written for the *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique* (col. 947). But after reconsidering the question we came to the conclusion that no such concession can be made nor is it necessary, as Vacant believed, to save the Cartesian theory of innate ideas.

Vacant gives their true meaning to the words, *"e rebus creatis"* but he concedes too little when he explains this phrase as merely an "indication." "The Council," he remarks, "believed it would serve a useful purpose to point out created things as the means by which we are enabled to acquire a natural knowledge of the existence of God; for it is difficult to see why the Council should have given this indication, if they were not the means of awakening in us an idea of God, which is present in the minds of all men from the time of birth. Moreover, the propositions drawn up by the Council signify in their *natural sense* [the italics are mine], that created things furnish the principles from which the human mind derives its knowledge of God, and by which it draws its conclusion, 'through the things that are made,' that God exists." (See Vacant, *op. cit.,* p. 297). This is indeed the natural sense of the words, but they seem to be of greater force than a mere indication. The words, included in a dogmatic

10 In other words, the human mind has direct knowledge only of contingent beings and of the first principles of reasoning, and does not rise up to God except by a method of demonstration in which tire first principles arc the major and created things the minor premise.

formula that reads like an anathema, form a part of the definition, and though they may seem to have been added as an afterthought, yet, if their insertion or omission really modifies the meaning of the proposition, they must be considered as expressing a defined truth. If it were not so, we could never refer with confidence to such definitions; for doubts or evasions would always present themselves to the mind as possibilities, which would be foreign to the mind of Holy Church, who instructs her children simply and sincerely in the truths of the Catholic faith and demands that they receive them with the same disposition. That is why the first proposition of the Antimodernist Oath merely insists upon the natural sense of the words of the Council, as is shown by the insertion of the phrase: "*tamquam causam per effectus* (as a cause [is known] by its effects)." This fact obliges us to assign to the principle of causality an ontological and transcendental value, for without it reason could never rise from created things to the existence of God, as from effect to cause.

Thus we see that Kantism is formally condemned, but not exactly the theory of Descartes. Kantism, as we shall explain later on, in discussing the word *"certo,"* was certainly included in the Council's condemnation, just as Traditionalism and Fideism. The Kantian theory cannot explain the expressions, *"e rebus creatis"* and *"per ea quae jacta sunt"* by saying that the existence of God is merely a postulate of practical reason, a *practically necessary supposition,* granted that duty is an established fact and that in this life there is absence of harmony between virtue and happiness. This false interpretation of the language of the Council is definitively disproved by the terms of the Antimodernist Oath. But the Cartesian theory of the innate idea of God is not condemned. Howsoever the *origin* of this idea and of the principle of causality may be explained, it is sufficient to admit that they have an ontological and transcendental *value,* enabling reason to rise from created things to the existence of God. This proof, de-

rived from the notions of .contingency and causality, was not rejected by Descartes; nay, he even developed the argument: *"e contingentia mentis,"* though he strongly insisted upon two proofs, concerning the validity or non-validity of which the Council made no pronouncement. One of these was the proof deduced from the idea of the infinite and of the necessity of an adequate cause for this idea. The other proof was that known as ontological. It is quite certain that the Council never thought of condemning the ontological proof, which takes as its principle of argumentation not the works of God, but the very idea of God. On this point the spokesman of the Deputatio de Fide made the following observation: "Who among us, in confirming by his vote the doctrine contained in this proposition, thinks of condemning the famous argument of St. Anselm, no matter what his private opinion of the same may be?" (See Vacant, Vol. I, p. 298). Still less does the conciliar definition mean to exclude the proof for die eternal truths so often set forth by St. Augustine and many Catholic philosophers.

It is only Ontologism that was condemned by the Holy Office. (See Denzinger, nn. 1659–1663, 1891-1930). For the innate idea of God that the Cartesians say we have, the Ontologists substituted an intuitive vision of Him, considering that this knowledge of God, essential to the human mind, is the source of all our other ideas.

The insertion of the word "*visibilia,*" and this in italics, in the first proposition of the Antimodernist Oath, is a sign that the Church insists upon the literal interpretation of the words of the Council and of the quotation from St. Paul. To exclude sensible things from the phrase *"e rebus creatis,"* and to say that the only certain proofs for the existence of God are those based upon the intellectual and moral life of man, would evidently be to depart from the original and plain meaning of these words. I'rom such an interpretation it would follow that created things,

as such, do not enable us to arrive at a knowledge of God, as from effect to cause.

Would it be sufficient to admit that the arguments based on the principle of causality lead us to acknowledge the fact of a prime mover, a first cause, a necessary being, an intelligent designer, but that they cannot give us the certainty that there is an infinitely perfect God, and that to acquire such a certainty, the ontological argument is absolutely necessary? This is clearly a Kantian idea. We do not believe that this explanation is acceptable, since the proposition is concerned with "God, the beginning and end of all things." It is, indeed, the true God, who can be known with certainty by the way of causality from sensible things. Besides, the knowledge of God, thus acquired, must include, at least implicitly or virtually, along with the various other divine attributes, absolute perfection. This means, as we have already pointed out, that this attribute of God is such that it can be logically deduced therefrom.

4) The kind of knowledge thus acquired is expressed by the words, *"certo cognosci, adeoque demonstrari etiam posse* (can be known with certainty, and therefore also proved)." The Council had simply said, *"certo cognosci."* Here, also, it may be asked: Does the Antimodernist Oath merely emphasize the natural sense of the conciliar definition, so as to exclude unjustifiable interpretations, or does it add a new declaration?

That the words *"certo cognosci"* mean the same as *"demonstrari,"* can easily be shown from the fact that *"certo cognosci,"* in the canon of the Council, signifies: (1) a certainty which is the result of reasoning *{naturali rationis lumine}*; (2) an absolute certainty; (3) a certainty acquired by indirect reasoning *"e rebus creatis"* by *"ea quae jacta sunt!'*

We have had occasion to note that this certain knowledge obtained by reasoning is, as the Council says, that which causes us to adhere to the intrinsic truth of things "because of the in-

trinsic evidence of such truth, as perceived by the natural light of reason." It is a knowledge by means of which we are able to give an account of what we affirm to be true.

We have seen that this particular knowledge, acquired by reasoning, is, according to the Council, a *mediate* knowledge, acquired through the medium of the visible works of God. What else is a certain and mediate knowledge acquired by reasoning, but a demonstration? And what else is a certain knowledge acquired by reasoning *"ab effectu"* but an *"a posteriori"* demonstration? Being the result of reasoning, it differs from faith; being mediate, it is opposed to intuition; being certain, it differs from opinion.

The only difficulty that might present itself is whether the Council meant to say that absolute certainty could be obtained by this process of reasoning. There is no possible doubt on this head. We have already remarked that amongst the comments which, together with the elaborate *schema,* were presented to the Fathers of the Council by the Deputatio de Fide, there was one to the effect that "the definition that reason can acquire a certain knowledge of God by means of created things, seemed necessary, as well as the corresponding canon, not only on account of Traditionalism, but also because of the wide-spread error that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated by any *apodictic proof,*[11] and therefore cannot be known with certainty by reason." (See Vacant, Vol. I, pp. 286 and 609). As previously stated, Bishop Gasser, in the report read by him before the Council in the name of the Deputatio de Fide, was somewhat more explicit, referring to the opinion maintained by the Positivists, or, as he styled them, "the French Encyclopedists and the foremost defenders of the critical philosophy in Germany." "This very common opinion," he remarked, "is that the existence of God cannot be proved with *absolute certainty,*[11] . . . and that the

11 The italics here arc mine.

arguments which have always been considered so forceful, are still open to discussion."

We shall realize more fully the import of the word *"certo,"* if we recall that of the six amendments demanding the omission of this word, and which were rejected by a large majority, one read as follows: "I approve of the omission of the word *certo, for* although the proposition in which it occurs seems to me to be philosophically true, nevertheless, if the word be included, it does not seem to me to be sufficiently clear that the proposition is a revealed truth, so as to have it defined as an article of faith."

These amendments could not be accepted: for Sacred Scripture (Wisd. XIII, 1-5; Rom. 1, 20)[12] . . . calls vain, foolish, and inexcusable those persons who could not discover God by means of reason. It is evident, therefore, that the Council by the word

[12] Wisd. XIII, 1-5:

"Foolish by nature are all men who know not God,
And who cannot from the good things they behold
Soar aloft to contemplate the One Who is.
Nor by a consideration of His works, see net who this workman is.
But they regarded the fire, the wind, the mobile air,
The circle of the stars, the angry waves, the bright and celestial orbs of day and night,
As the gods that rule the world.
If charmed by their beauty, they took these to be gods,
Let them know how far above these is the Lord of all;
For the Author Himself of beauty made all those things.
And if they admired in these their power and their effects,
Let them understand, that mightier far is He who made them all.
For the grandeur and the beauty of created things,
By comparison make known to us the One Who Their Creator is."
(Crampon's paraphrase).—Cfr. Rom. I, 18-20:
Again:
"Verily, the anger of God swiftly descends from the heights of Heaven upon all the ungodliness and injustice of men, who through their injustice, hold truth captive, since what can be known of God, they discover that in themselves, God having made manifest the same. Truly, His invisible perfections, His eternal power and divinity, since the creation of the world, have been made clear to the mind through the medium of created things. They arc, therefore, inexcusable, in that having known God, they did not glorify Him as God, and did not return Him thanks; but they became vain in their thoughts and their foolish heart was darkened." *(Ibid.)* (Crampon.)

"certo" meant to designate absolute certainty; and since this certainty is at the same time rational and mediate, *i.e.,* acquired by an indirect process of reasoning, it must be the result of a demonstration.

Moreover, the Council, in the chapter which treats of the connection between faith and reason, expressly declares that "right reason demonstrates the foundations of faith *(recta ratio fidei fundamenta demonstret).*" These foundations are, on the one hand, the existence of God and His veracity; on the other, the fact of revelation. One of the Fathers of the Council requested that, since the word *"demonstret"* implies that the process of reasoning starts from principles the truth of which has been perceived by the light of reason itself, the word *"probet"* should be substituted for it, as this latter word does not involve such an inference. The suggested amendment, however, was rejected by the Council. Monsignor Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, opposed it in the name of the Deputatio de Fide, for the reason that, "though the intrinsic truth of the faith cannot be demonstrated, the foundations of the faith, in a certain sense,[13] *can* be demonstrated, and bearing this in mind, such expressions as 'the demonstration of gospel truth,' 'the demonstration of the faith,' have been of frequent, nay habitual, usage in ecclesiastical tradition." [14]

13 The phrase, "in a certain sense," does not mean that the demonstration is not rigorous, but that the foundations of the faith viewed in one sense arc the object of demonstration, and in another sense arc not demonstrable, but the object of supernatural belief. The fact of revelation is the object of demonstration if one considers the supernatural *"quoad modum,"* (as a miraculous divine intervention), but not if one considers the supernatural *"quoad substantiam."* From this point of view, revelation is the formal motive for a faith that is supernatural *"quoad substantiam,"* and an object of faith. (Sec St. Thomas, Commentary on St. John, ch. 5, lect. 6, n. 9; Cajetan, in II, Ilac q. I, a. I, ŋ. XI; Salmanticcnscs, *De Gratia,* tr. XIV, disp. III, dub. Ill, n. 40; consult also on this subject the author's work, *De Revelatione.* I, pp. 498-511 and 527).

14 See Vacant, *Constitutions du Concile du Vatican,* Vol. II, pp. 258 and 406. The second proposition of the Antimodernist Oath confirms what has been said about revelation and faith.

If, then, the Council does not hesitate to speak of "demonstration" when it is a question of establishing the fact of divine revelation, even though this fact can be proved but indirectly by referring to external signs (miracles), which in themselves directly manifest only the free intervention of divine omnipotence: with far more reason does it acknowledge the demonstration of the existence of God, since this fact is proved not only by external signs, but also by effects proceeding directly from the First Cause, capable of furnishing a direct *a posteriori* demonstration.

Therefore, we must conclude that this passage from the Antimodernist Oath does but emphasize the natural sense of the definition, in order to guard against unjustifiable interpretations. And hence this same proposition of the Oath merely reproduces in more formal terms the teaching of the Holy See, which on various occasions, when referring to the existence of God, has made use of terms equivalent in meaning to "demonstration." On this point, see the propositions which Bautain and Bonnetty were compelled to sign (Denz., nn. 1622 and 1650). The condemnation of Hermes (Denz., n. 1620) and of Frohschammer (Denz., n. 1670) may also be consulted.

Now that the Church has adopted into her official language the precise term "demonstration," and added the phrase, *"per visibilia,"* and especially, *"tamquam causam per effectus,"* she has shown without a doubt, that she officially adopts as her own the teaching of St. Thomas and of almost all other theologians on the natural means at our disposal for acquiring a knowledge of God and accepts as valid the proofs based on causality, which originate from the world of sense, without pronouncing on the validity or non-validity of other proofs, as, for instance, that based upon the ontological order.

5) The possibility of demonstrating the existence of God is expressed in the Antimodernist Oath by the simple word *"posse,"*

which is but a repetition of the term employed by the Council.

Here we must point out that the question is not one of fact, as a note attached to the *schema* drawn up by the special commission on Catholic doctrine appropriately remarked: "The question is not whether, *de facto,* individual human beings derive their rudimentary knowledge of God from this natural manifestation, or if they are not rather urged to seek it in the revelation proposed to them, being made cognizant of His existence through the revealed teaching given to them. The point at issue is the power of reason.15 The possibility defined is simply the *physical possibility* common to all human beings. On this point the spokesman of the Deputatio de Fide remarked: "The doctrine hereby submitted must be considered as generally true, whether man is viewed in the purely natural state or in that of fallen nature."16 Hence it cannot be maintained that, in consequence of *original sin,* there is no justification for the assertion that reason is assured of the objective validity of its conclusions, unless this same faculty is fortified by the superadded light of an illuminative grace.17

It has not been defined as *de fide* that there is no difficulty in the actual exercise of this natural power of reason, but the doctrine itself is the commonly accepted teaching of theologians and is *proxima fidei.* This does not mean that scientific demonstration is accessible to all, but that reason, by a simple inference deduced from the principle of causality, immediately rises to the certainty that God exists. The *sensus communis* need not trouble itself with the difficulties that present themselves from

16 See Vacant, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, pp. 28 and 583.

10 Ibid., pp. 29 and 673.

17 It seems difficult to admit what Rousslot has written on this subject in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique,* art. "Intellectualisme," col. 1074. At least we should like to know how such a theory can be reconciled with certain decisions of the Church on this question (see Denz., nos. 1627 and 1670; also St. Thomas, la Ilae, q. 109, art. I; and Gonct, *De Gratia,* disp. I, art. I, § II).

the point of view of objectivity or from a consideration of the transcendental value of the principle of causality. It leaves the discussion of these problems to the metaphysicians, and continues spontaneously to avail itself of these principles as often as these same principles demand it. The reason for saying that this common teaching of the theologians is *proxima fidei* is that the Scripture declares pagans to be unreasonable and inexcusable for not having any knowledge of God. (Rom. I, 20-21; Wisd. XIII, x-9). In other words, it was morally possible for them to acquire a certain knowledge concerning the existence of the true God. As Petau 18 and Thomassin 19 point out, the Fathers of the Church all agree in saying that one could not be ignorant of the existence of God without sin. All theologians deny the possibility of ignorance or of invincible error on the subject of God's existence. This means that speculative atheism is an impossibility for any man who has the use of reason and is in good faith. Good faith, in the sense in which the Church understands the term, differs considerably from what the world generally means by it. It implies not only that sincerity which is contrary to deceit, but it also denotes that one has made use of all the means at his disposal in order to arrive at the truth. In the quest of truth one may fail deliberately, not only in a direct way, when one does not want to see the truth, but also in an indirect way, when one does not want to avail oneself of the means that one ought to use, or when, through a perversion of the intellect, one agrees to doctrines that he ought to reject.

This remark permits us to acknowledge the portion of truth contained in the philosophy of human acts. From this point of view, the Church has condemned as scandalous and foolhardy the opinion of those who maintain the possibility of a *purely*

18 *De Deo,* Bk. I, chapters 1 and 2.
19 *De Deo,* Bk. I.

philosophical sin, which would be a fault against right reason, but not an offence against God. (Denz., n. 1290). The knowledge of moral obligation involved in the process of reasoning, which is the result of using reason in the right way, could not be explained satisfactorily without tire admission of at least a confused knowledge of God as the supreme legislator, if it be true, as the Syllabus of Pius IX affirms against those who defend the theory of an independent moral code, that all law derives its binding power from God.[20]

The idea of God as the primary being, the primary intelligence, the sovereign good, is as indelibly stamped upon the human conscience as are the first principles of the natural law. It is only one or the other of the essential attributes of God that may for a time be unknown. Thus the secondary precepts of the natural law may be blotted out of the human heart as a result of bad habits, as is the case with those who do not consider theft and unnatural vices as sinful. (St. Thomas, la Ilae, q. 94, a. 6).

This common teaching of theologians is being confirmed more and more by such works as Andrew Lang's *The Malting of Religion* (2nd ed., London, 1900), Msgr. Le Roy's *La Religion des Primitifs* (Paris, 1909), and the articles written by Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt for the *Anthropos* (1908-1909).

According to Lang and Schmidt, the idea of God is not derived, as was commonly held since Tylor and Spenser, from Animism, ancestor worship, and the cult of nature personified, but antedates all these primitive forms of belief and is the result of tire natural development of the fundamental principles of reason, especially that of causality. This rational idea of a supreme Being underwent certain modifications through the

20 "Moral laws do not require divine sanction, and it is by no means necessary that human laws should be in conformity with the natural law, or that they should derive their binding power from God." (Denz., n. 1756).

mythical additions of the imagination. Throughout the centuries there has been opposition between reason and imagination. To a great extent the history of religions is but an account of the rivalry existing between these two faculties.[21]

Some Modernists claimed that the moral impossibility of acquiring a knowledge of God by natural means was beyond any doubt in view of the Council's express teaching on the moral necessity of revelation. We need but to read this particular passage of the Council attentively to see that there is nothing in it which contradicts the common opinion of theologians. If revelation is morally necessary, this is the case not solely that we may know the existence of God and our principal moral and religious obligations, but also in order that "the truths which among things divine *(fin rebus divinis')* are not of themselves beyond the ken of reason, may, even in the present condition of mankind, be known by all *with facility, with firm assurance, and with no admixture of error."*

All about God that in itself is accessible to reason, or, in other words, the ensemble of attributes studied in natural theology, constitutes the subject-matter of that knowledge for which revelation is declared to be a moral necessity. These attributes are: immutability, infinity, immensity, omniscience, absolute liberty, etc., etc. Now it is clear that not all persons can by their own powers of reason acquire a knowledge of this kind that would exclude both error and doubt. In this particular passage of the Council's definition, stressing the moral necessity of revelation, it was proposed to substitute for the words, "things divine," the phrase, "God and the natural law." The comment on this suggested amendment was, that though the formula was not so restricted in meaning, it had been chosen for that very reason. (See *Acta*

21 See *Christus, Manuel d'Histoire des Religions,* by J. Huby, S.J., 1912; *Ou en est l'Histoire des Religions,* by M. Bricout, 1912; *La Religion des Peuples non Civilises,* by Abbe Bros, 1908.

Concilii Vaticani, col. 509 and 122, amend. 19, and Chossat, art. "*Dieu,*" in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* col. 827).

If there is question of a scientific demonstration of the existence of God, we must admit that those philosophers who are of the sensualistic or subjectivistic school of thought can scarcely appreciate its true value. For them the arguments based on the theory of immanence will be more convincing, perhaps the only convincing ones. But it does not follow that this theory is necessarily and universally indispensable, and that we must raise to the rank of a thesis what, in matter of fact, is but the corollary of a false philosophy. And these same persons, if they possess supernatural faith, may by this faith give their assent to the first proposition of the Oath, without perceiving that what is said is intrinsically true, just as they give their assent to the supernatural mysteries of the Trinity or the Incarnation.

It remains for us to decide just what authoritative value is to be assigned to this particular proposition of the Antimodernist Oath, which recapitulates the doctrine contained in the dogmatic definition of the Council. Is this proposition a truth of the Catholic faith, to deny which would be heresy? Or is it to be considered as a truth of divine faith, not formally defined as such, so that it would be *haeresi proxima* to make the contradictory assertion? Or, finally, is it merely a certain truth connected with a dogma, so that its denial must be considered as erroneous?

First of all, it is clear, and also essential, that this proposition, taken as a whole, is inculcated by the infallible teaching office of the Church, for the opening words of the Oath plainly affirm: *"Ego firmiter amplector ac recipio omnia et singula, quae ab inerranti Ecclesiae magisterio definita, adserta, ac declarata sunt, praesertim ea doctrinae capita, quae hujus temporis erroribus directo adversantur."*

If the Church does not teach this first proposition of the Oath

as contained in divine revelation, then she does not demand of us that we believe it on the authority of God. But we are obliged to accept it formally, because of the infallible authority vested in her, not only in proposing to us what belongs to revelation, but in declaring whatever is certainly either in harmony with or in opposition to the revealed word of God. If one were to deny those truths which the Church teaches with infallible authority, though not declaring them to be revealed truths, one would not, on that account, be a heretic, for one would not be formally denying a doctrine revealed by God. But in the eyes of the Church one would be suspected of heresy and, practically speaking, would have lost the virtue of faith; for more often than not, it is difficult to withhold one's assent to these decisions without at the same time denying the dogma that the Church is infallible, or other revealed truths.

But it seems certain that this proposition is inculcated as a truth of divine faith, and this for the following reasons: (1) because the proposition forms part of a profession of faith; (2) because this profession of faith is introduced by the word *"profiteor"* which in ecclesiastical terminology signifies an act of faith;[22] (3) because the meaning of this word, *"profiteor"* is accurately determined by the concluding words of the third proposition, which are: *"Firma pariter fide credo."* These words certainly imply a supernatural act of faith, and the adverb *"pariter"* shows that the two preceding propositions are also *de fide.*

There are doctrines which are regarded as belonging to the deposit of divine faith in virtue of the almost unanimous consent or teaching of the Church, though they are not formally defined as truths of the Catholic faith, and consequently are not imposed under penalty of heresy. But the case is different with propositions of other professions of faith which are included in professions of faith employed by the universal Church. It may be ob-

22 See the one imposed upon the Greeks. Dcnz., nos. 460, 1083 and 1084.

jected that the Antimodernist Oath was not imposed on all the faithful, but only on the clergy. The answer to this objection is that some points of doctrine are certainly *de fide* and imposed as such, even by solemn judgments, which, being beyond the mental capacity of most laymen, are not explicitly taught to all the faithful, though all must implicitly believe them.

Another reason which leads us to conclude that this first proposition of the Antimodernist Oath, taken as a whole, enunciates a truth of the Catholic faith, is the fact, as we have already remarked, that it adds no new declaration to the dogmatic formula defined by tire Vatican Council, but merely insists upon the natural meaning of the text, in order to guard against wrong interpretations of the same.

5) *The condemnation of Modernist Agnosticism by the Encyclical* "Pascendi."

The teaching contained in the Antimodernist Oath may without difficulty be supplemented by what is said on this point in the paragraph commencing with the words *"Atque haec"* of the Encyclical *"Pascendi."* (See Denz., n. 2081). The Modernists repudiate "all ontological realism as absurd and baneful ... as an appearance beyond the scope of thought, which by its very definition denotes something absolutely unthinkable. We shall never succeed in explaining away this objection, and must therefore conclude, in agreement with all modern philosophy, that a certain type of idealism has obtruded itself upon us." (E. Le Roy, *"Comment se pose le Problème de Dieu"* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* March and July, 1907, pp. 495 and 488). Kantian and post-Kantian criticism had almost ruined the foundation of the traditional proofs for the existence of God, namely, the objectivity of the principles of right reasoning. The Encyclical *"Pascendi"* condemns this "phenomenalism" and reminds us that its agnostic consequences have been denounced by the Vati-

can Council. The condemnation reads as follows: "And to begin with the philosopher, the Modernists posit as the basis of their religious philosophy the doctrine known as agnosticism. Human reason, strictly limited in range to 'phenomena,' which means to the appearances of things exactly as they appear, has neither the power nor the right to go beyond these limits, and is, therefore, incapable of acquiring any knowledge of God, not even knowledge, by means of created things, of His existence. From this they infer: (i) that God cannot be the direct object of our knowledge; (2) that His actual intervention in this world of ours cannot be a historical fact. In the light of such principles, what becomes of natural theology, of the motives of credibility, of external revelation? The Modernists have given them up as belonging to intellectualism, a system which, they say, is to be considered as ridiculous, and long ago obsolete. That the Catholic Church has publicly condemned these monstrous errors is for them no deterrent. For the Vatican Council has decreed . . ." (here the canons of the Council are quoted which refer to the knowledge of God from the two sources of reasoning and revelation. See Denz., n. 2072).

The agnostic denial of the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God is, therefore, a heresy.

It would also be heretical to assert that God is not intelligent, free, just, or merciful, in the literal meaning of these words, but merely in a metaphorical sense. As a matter of fact, these divine attributes have been formally defined as of faith by the Vatican Council. (See Denz., n· 1782).

Neither can it be maintained that, apart from the knowledge we have of God through the *sensus communis,* and the propositions defined as of faith, there can be no question of a scientific knowledge of His existence and principal attributes; for this would be to deny the scientific character of natural as well as supernatural theology, and to maintain that these disciplines,

whose purpose it is to define more clearly what we know by the *sensus communis,* or by faith, becomes hopelessly entangled in the error known as Anthropomorphism. From this it would follow that it is impossible to defend by any scientific argument the claim of the *sensus communis* against the objections of the Agnostics, Pantheists, Determinists, etc., and to explain satisfactorily the apparent antinomies raised against us. The Encyclical *"Pascendi"* draws special attention to the formula that "God can in no way be the direct object of knowledge," as being an expression of Agnosticism. (Denz., n. 2072).

Among the Agnostic propositions previously condemned was Eckhard's, that "God is neither good, nor better, nor the best; therefore, I speak incorrectly if I call God good, just as if I were to call black, white." (Denz., n. 528). Another condemned proposition is that of the Nominalist, Nicholas d'Autrecourt, disciple of Ockham, who said that "God is, and God is not, mean exactly the same thing, although in a different way." (Denz., n. 555). St. Thomas rejected as contrary to the faith the Agnosticism of Maimonides (Rabbi Moses), who said that God is not formally, but only virtually good, as the cause of goodness found in created things. (St. Thomas, la, q. 13, a. 5; *De Potentia,* q. 7, a. 5). We shall have to recur at length to this error of Maimonides when we come to discuss the nature of God and His attributes.

The Encyclical likewise condemns the theory of "immanence, which is the positive side of the Modernist system, just as Agnosticism is the negative side. Once natural theology is repudiated, ... all external revelation abolished, the explanation of the fact of religion must be sought in man himself, in vital immanence and the subconscious self." (Denz., n. 2074).

Finally, the Encyclical declares inadequate the proof for the existence of God based upon the theory of immanence, as is evident from the following paragraph: "If now, passing on to the believer, we want to know what, according to the Modernist

view, distinguishes the Modernist from the philosopher, the first thing to notice is that the philosopher admits the divine reality as the object of faith, but for him this reality exists only in the soul of the believer, that is to say, as object of his sentiment and his affirmations, which are limited to the sphere of phenomena. If God exists as a separate being, apart from individual sentiments and affirmations, this fact does not interest the philosopher, and he abstracts from it entirely. Not so with the believer. For him, God really exists, independently of the believer; he is certain of it, and in this he ditfers from the philosopher. If you ask on what foundation this certainty rests, the Modernists reply, on *'individual experience.'* In taking this attitude, they separate themselves from the Rationalists, only to fall into an error of the Protestants and certain pseudo-mystics. [See, *e.g.,* the errors of Michael de Molinos; Denz., n. 1273]. They explain this process as follows. If we scrutinize the religious sentiment, we discover a certain intuition of the heart, by means of which, and without any intermediate process, man grasps the reality of God and from it concludes that He exists, with a certainty that far surpasses the certainty of any of the sciences. And this is truly an experience, superior to that of any mental process. Many look upon it with contempt and deny it, as, *e. g.,* the Rationalists, but that is simply and solely because they refuse to place themselves into the necessary moral conditions. Therefore, according to the Modernists, the true and proper explanation why one believes, is to be sought in this experience. How contrary to the Catholic faith all this is, we have already seen in a decree of the Vatican Council. Further on we shall see that such a view opens wide the door to atheism." (Denz., n. 2081). No one was surprised that Modernism was condemned, except those who were unaware of the definitions of the Vatican Council against Fideism.

The words of the Encyclical *"Pascendi"* concerning the Pan-

theistic tendencies of Immanentism have been verified in our own times. We find traces of this error, with slight nuances, both amongst philosophers and Christian believers. Thus Bergson, who holds to the principle of Idealism (that there is no such thing as a reality corresponding to thought), substituting for objective reality, which admits the ontological value of the principles of reasoning, what he calls the "direct perception of the essence of life, the flux of experienced duration," is led to conclude "that there is nothing but obscurity in the idea of creation, if we think of *things* which are created, and a *thing* which creates, as we habitually do, as the understanding cannot help doing. This illusion is natural to our intellect, which functions essentially in a practical way, constituted as it is to make known to us things and states, rather than changes and acts. But things and states are only views taken by our mind of the process of becoming. Things do not exist, only actions. . . . From this point of view we must conceive God as a centre from which worlds shoot out like rockets in a display of fire-works, always with the proviso that I consider this centre, not as a *thing,* but as a *continuous projection.* God, thus interpreted, has nothing of the already made; He is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation, so conceived, is not a mystery: we experience it in ourselves when we act freely. That new things can be added to those already existing, undoubtedly is an absurdity, since the *thing* is the result of a *solidification* brought about by our understanding, and there are never any other things except those which the mind has evolved. . . . But that action increases, as it goes on, that it creates in the measure of its advance, is what each of us finds when he watches himself acting." *{L'Evolution Créatrice,* 2nd ed., 1907, p. 270). What name shall we give to this principle, which is the source of all life and of all reality? "For want of a better name," says Bergson, "we have called it consciousness. But this is not the narrowed consciousness which functions in each of us." (P. 258).

"Consciousness or supra-consciousness," he says again, "is the name for the rocket whose extinguished fragments fall back as matter; consciousness, again, is the name for that which remains of the rocket itself, passing through the fragments and lighting them up into organisms. But this consciousness, which is a *need of creation,* does not manifest itself to itself except where creation is possible. It goes to sleep when life is condemned to automatism; it awakens from slumber as soon as the possibility of making a choice arises." *{Ibid.,* p. 283). It is immanent in all that which is life and freedom.

Clearly this Immanentist philosophy of "becoming" is in direct opposition to the definition of the Vatican Council asserting a real distinction between God and the world. God is no longer *"una singularis substantia"* (one sole substance); substances or things do not exist. Neither is God *"simplex omnino et incommutabilis"* (absolutely simple and unchangeable). He is "a reality which makes itself in a reality which unmakes itself." *{Evolution Créatrice,* p. 269). He is not *"re et essentia a mundo distinctus"* (really and essentially distinct from the world), but "a continuous projection," and can neither exist nor be conceived apart from the world which issues from Him. He is that vital urge prior to the intellect which reappears in all becoming, but especially so in that of which our consciousness has experience. This vital urge is called freedom; but this freedom, which acts neither intelligently nor according to any law, is a sort of blind instinct that reminds us very much of the "unconscious" of Schopenhauer.

This same doctrine, with slight changes in the manner of presentation, was held by the Catholic Modernists. In July, 1907, Le Roy wrote as follows: "Our life is incessant creation. And the same is true of the world. It is for this reason that immanence and transcendence are no longer contradictories; they correspond to two distinct moments of duration, namely, immanence to

what has become, transcendence to what is becoming. If we declare that God is immanent, it is because we know what He has become in us and in the world; but for the world and for us He always remains an infinite in the becoming, an infinite which will be creation in the strict acceptation of the term, not mere development, and from this point of view, God appears as transcendent, and it is especially in our dealings with Him that we must treat Him as transcendent, as we pointed out apropos of the divine personality." *{Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* July, 1907, p. 512).

This theory conceives God as incapable of existing apart from the world in which He is becoming. Nevertheless, it is of faith that it would have been possible for God not to create and that He did not create from eternity. (Denz., nn. 391 and 501). The Modernists, it is true, affirm the divine personality in a pragmatic sense (that we must behave towards God as towards a person), but evidendy such a view of the divine personality in no way implies that independence and metaphysical transcendence which is defined by the Vatican Council. In a former treatise[23] we pointed out how these Pantheistic conclusions inevitably flow from the theory of immanence. They are summed up in the first proposition of the series condemned by the Syllabus of Pius IX, which reads as follows: "God is identical with the nature of things, and, therefore, subject to change; He becomes God in man and in the world, and all things are God and have His very substance; God is identical with the world, and hence spirit with matter, necessity with freedom, truth with falsity, good with evil, justice with injustice." (Denz., n. 1701).

Immanentism, considered as a doctrine, is therefore absolutely contrary to the faith of the Church; can we say the same of Immanentism considered merely as a method?

28 Le Sens Commun, la Philosophie de l'Être et les Formules Dogmatiques, Pans, 1900.

6) *Does the teaching of the Church permit us to maintain that the method of immanence is indispensable and that it precedes all others?*

The new apologetic spoken of so highly by Blondel and Laberthonnière, though repudiating immanence as a doctrine, admits it to be indispensable as a method and asserts that this method is the *only* one that can succeed in co-ordinating the various arguments offered by the other methods in such a way that there results from it a valid demonstration; and that this method, therefore, holds the first place, because without it the other methods would be inadequate and ineffective.

Fr. Schwalm, O.P., examined this theory at length from a philosophical and theological point of view, in a series of articles written for the *Revue Thomiste?** This criticism was resumed by Fr. Chossat, S.J., in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* art. "Dieu" (cols. 799-802 and 859-871). Michelet also pointed out the dangers of this method in a work entitled, *Dieu et ΓAgnosticisme Contemporain,* pp. 246 ff . . . , and, finally, Fr. Tonquédec, S.J., attacked it in his book entitled, *Immanence,* an essay in criticism of Maurice Blondel's doctrine. It seems difficult not to accept the conclusions arrived at by these four critics and several others. It seems that this apologetic by the method of immanence, thus understood, cannot be reconciled with the definition of the Vatican Council and it unconsciously revives the error of Baius and Jansenius.

As a matter of fact, in proportion as this method denies the validity of the proofs for the existence of God as given by the schools and traditional theodicy from Plato to Leibniz, it accepts the Kantian and Positivist thesis of the inability of speculative reason to know God with certainty.

24 Les Illusions de l'idéalisme et leurs dangers pour la foi, pp. 413 ff.; *L'Apologétique contemporaine,* 1897, PP· &·› *crise l'apologétique,* 1897, pp. 239 ff·; *La croyance naturelle et la science,* 1897, pp. 627 ff.; *Le dogmatisme du coeur et celui de l'esprit,* 1898, pp. 578 ff.

M. Blondel states precisely what he thinks on this point in his book, *L'Action,* page 341, where we read: "A proof which is merely a logical argument always remains abstract and incomplete; it does not lead to being; it does not compel the mind to admit that such is a real necessity. On the other hand, a proof based on the total movement of life, a proof which takes in all action, will compel conviction. If such a proof, following the logical method of exposition, should have the force of immediate conviction, it must leave the mind no avenue of escape. It is indeed the special function of this action to bring them all together; by this means all the incomplete proofs are united and form one synthetic demonstration; considered apart, as so many units, they are ineffective; united, they have demonstrative value. It is only on this condition that they will reflect the movement of life and stimulate the same. Under the dynamic influence of action, they will lose none of their efficacy." A few pages further on he remarks: "The notion of a first cause or of a moral ideal, the idea of a metaphysical perfection or of a pure act, all these concepts of human reason, vain, false, and idolatrous, if one considers them separately as abstract concepts, become true, vivid, and effective as soon as they are united, and are no longer a sport of the understanding, but a practical certainty. . . . The foundation for this certitude of die 'one and only necessary' is, therefore, to be sought in practice. As far as life in all its complexity is concerned, it is action alone that is by its very nature complete and expressive of totality. It embraces everything; and that is why we appeal to this same principle to explain the incontestable fact of being and the convincing proof of the existence of the same. The subtleties of dialectics, no matter how elaborate and ingenious they may be, are of no more consequence than would be a stone thrown by a child at the sun." *{Ibid.,* p. 350). On page 428 we read: "To believe that one can arrive at the idea of being and legitimately affirm whatever reality

there may be to it, without having gone through the whole process which originates from an intuitive perception of the necessity of God and of religious experience, means that one is the victim of an illusion." A few pages further on he writes: "There is no object of which it is possible to think and to affirm the reality, without having embraced by an act of the mind the entire series, without in fact surrendering oneself to the demands made by the alternative. To put it briefly, we may overlook the main point in which the truth of being shines conspicuously; that being which enlightens every understanding, and in whose presence the will without exception must come to a decision. We have an idea of objective reality, we affirm that external objects are real; but to do this, we must implicitly place before ourselves the problem of our destiny, and subordinate to option all that we are and all that concerns us. We cannot acquire the notion of being and of beings, except by way of this alternative. It follows inevitably that, as die decision varies, so does the idea of being. *The knowledge of being* implies that option is a necessity, being becomes known, not before, but after this freedom of choice" (pp. 435-436).

A. Valensin in an article written for the *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique* tries his best to bring Blondel's doctrine into agreement with the traditional philosophy, and believes that he has interpreted him correctly. He says (col. 598): "The method of immanence supposes that attitude of mind in which, as a matter of fact and right, we distinguish, as it were, two phases in the knowledge which we have of being: the phase that precedes and that which follows the intervention of the will. The first kind of knowledge, that which precedes the exercise of free will, obtrudes itself on us. *It is objective.* It also appeals to us. It is for us a principle of decision and responsibility. We may call it, if we wish, a conceptual knowledge *(per notionem').* It leads one who makes good use of it into a knowledge that is, as it were, *per*

connaturalitatem. This latter knowledge contains within itself the true germ of perfect intellection and veritable possession."

From this point of view there would seem to be hardly any difference between Blondel's general philosophy and, let us say, that of Ollé-Laprune, or even of St. Thomas, and it is difficult to explain the merciless criticism of intellectualism made by the author of *L'Action.* Fr. Schwalm and several others who agree with him must have been seriously mistaken, and the present writer must have been guilty of the same error in his criticism of the validity of the proofs for the existence of God proposed by Blondel. (See *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique,* cols. 952-956).

Is the knowledge which precedes option objective according to Blondel, as Valensin affirms, and as must be admitted if one wishes to defend the validity of the traditional metaphysics of the Schools?

We find the answer to this question in the author's work, *Action,* where on pages 437-438 we read: *"The knowledge which, before option, was purely subjective* and propulsive, after the choice becomes privative and constitutive of being. . . . The first [knowledge], which necessarily brings up the problem, and by which we are given an integral view, although often confused and condensed, of the order existing in the universe, is but a mental image of the object in the subject, or, better still, we may say (so as to impress upon the mind the origin of this *subjective truth),* it is merely the production by man of the *idea* that the objects of his thought and the conditions of his action are convincingly real. The second kind of knowledge, that which follows the free choice made in the presence of this reality conceived as necessary, is no longer merely a subjective state of mind; for instead of *positing* the problem in the practical order, this knowledge translates the solution of it into our thought; instead of confronting us with *what has to be done, it directs the attention to what is an accomplished fact, to that which is.* Thus it truly

is an *objective* knowledge, even though it is obliged to admit a deficiency in action."

This solution savours of metaphysical voluntarism; before freedom of choice we have only *"subjective truth',' "a subjective state of mind";* "the will solves the problem presented by the intellect." *{Action,* p. 439).

If, then, the knowledge preceding free choice can be called *objective,* as Valensin would have it, this word cannot mean, according to Blondel, a knowledge which has direct contacts with being, but merely one which is necessarily engendered by the movement of our spirit in determining phenomena. This, as has been said on a previous occasion,[25] is the objective reality of an idea which is the object of knowledge, but not a sufficient means of acquiring a certain knowledge of reality. When this idea is ratified by subsequent action, it becomes the principle by which we get to know not merely phenomena, but being itself. This implies that, *de facto,* it corresponded to the reality before it wras unified and vivified by action, but it did not correspond in *its own right,* by virtue of a conformity founded on its intentional or representative existence in the mind. The Encyclical *"Pascendi,"* in its criticism of the Modernist doctrine, clearly distinguishes between these two phases of knowledge.[28]

25 *Revue Thomiste,* July, 1913, p. 480.

20 "If now, passing on to the believer, we wish to know what, according to the Modernist's view, distinguishes hiin from the philosopher, the main thing to note is this: that the philosopher admits indeed the divine reality as the object of faith, but for him this reality exists only in the soul of the believer, that is to say, as the object of his sentiments and affirmations: and these, after all, do not transcend die sphere of phenomena. If God exists as a separate being, apart from individual sentiments and affirmations, this does not interest the philosopher; he abstracts from it entirely. Not so with the believer. For him, on the contrary, God really exists, apart from the believer; he is certain of it, and in this he differs from the philosopher. If you ask what foundation, in the last analysis, there is for this certainty, the Modernists reply that it rests on individual experience. In this they separate themselves from the rationalists, but only to adopt the doctrine of the Protestants and pseudo-mystics. This is how they explain the process. If we analyze the religious sentiment, we promptly discover in it a certain intuition

By those who have made only a superficial study of this question, the term "objective" will be accepted as expressing the traditional teaching; but by the defenders of the philosophy of Action it will be understood in exactly the opposite sense.

Blondel's own statements admit of no doubt on this point. On pages 426f. of *L'Action* we read: "Finally, even when we feel the need of determining the idea that has necessarily been germinated in us of a subsistent reality, of affirming the existence of objects of knowledge, of defining the nature of this objective existence, we have first of all to consider only the inevitable sequence of relations that have been taken as integral by the consciousness: this is the science of the *solidarity of appearances,* the integration of which we are concerned in establishing. . . . To show that we cannot help affirming (whatever may be the value of this assertion) the reality of the objects of knowledge and of the motives of action . . . does not mean, despite the change of perspective, that we have gotten away from *phenomenal determinism;* it merely shows how, by the very fact that we think and act, we must of necessity so conduct ourselves as if this order in the universe were real, and these obligations well founded."

Again, on page 463 occurs the following statement: "As for science, what difference could one discover between what anything seems to be, and what it actually is? And how does the reality itself differ from an *invincible and permanent illusion,* or, we might say, from an *eternal appearance?* If we consider the *practical order,* the case is different. In acting as if it were true, a thing possesses that which is, if it truly is." This reads like an abstract from the writings of Hermes.[27]

of the heart, by means of which, and without any intermediary, man grasps the fact that God is truly a reality, and from it concludes that He exists, with a certainty which far surpasses that of science. How contrary to the Catholic faith this all is, we have already seen in a decree of the Vatican Council" (Denz. 2081).

27 Hermes under the influence of Kant, whom he pretended to refute, wrote in much the same way. Vacant in his *Etudes sur le Concile du Vatican,* Vol. I,

The truth of the knowledge that precedes option, as Blondel admits, is merely "subjective." But what is the so-called objective truth of the knowledge that follows? Blondel replies: "For the abstract and chimerical notion of truth as a perfect correspondence between thought and thing, we must substitute this —that it is a real correspondence between mind and life." [28] We must "substitute for the question of the agreement between thought and reality the problem ... of the immanent agreement of ourselves with ourselves?" [29]

"Metaphysics," he says, *"has its substance in the will when in operation. Only under this experimental and dynamic aspect has it any truth;* it is not so much a science of *what actually is,* as of what is *brought into being and becoming:* the ideal of to-day may be the real of tomorrow. But the ideal always survives, and is ever the same, more or less misjudged, and asserting its

p. 125, writes: "The doctrines of Hermes, taken in their ensemble, received their inspiration from the philosophy of Descartes, and especially from that of Kant, whom he thought he was refuting. Thus we may say of him what the Prologue of our Constitution remarks about all semi-rationalists: that he allowed himself to be led astray by doctrines which have nothing in common with Catholic tradition. Influenced by the writings of Kant, he distinguished in an absolute manner between theoretical reason (that which perceives the necessity of the things it affirms) and practical reason (that which admits the truth and obligation inherent in those things that are in conformity with the dignity of human nature). Under this same influence he concluded that the foundation and pledge of all certitude was to be sought exclusively in practical reason." Perrone *(Tractatus de Locis Theologicis,* s. I, c. I) writes: "After a series of extensive and subtle researches, Hermes concludes with Kant that theoretical reason can attain only a purely subjective persuasion of the objective reality, which, perhaps, is merely phenomenal and apparent." It is easy to see how Hermes derived his principal errors from this false thesis. (Sec Vacant, *loc. cit.* and *Kirchenlexikon,* 2nd cd., art. "Hermes"). He concluded that the proofs advanced in support of revelation, usually drawn from miracles, have merely the force of probability, but not of certainty; and consequently he refused to admit that the authority of God revealing truths is the formal motive of theological faith. These errors were condemned by Pius IX and the Vatican Council. (Denz., n. 1634).

28 Blondel, *Point de départ de la recherche philosophique* in the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne,* 1906, I, p. 235.

20 Blondel, *L'Illusion idéaliste,* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* Nov., 1898, pp. 12-18.

presence in proportion as mankind advances to intellectual maturity. Although the science of metaphysics remains variable, therefore, although it may be merely in a state of transition, like all the phenomena of life and thought hitherto studied, we may say that it determines what in the real transcends the fact. By this is made known to us what is *relatively permanent, absolute,* and *transcendent,* what the voluntary action has necessarily contributed to reality, given for the purpose of establishing it in the same—in a word, what constitutes the permanent contribution of thought and reason to the world's knowledge and the organization of human life." *(L'Action,* p. 297).

If the objective truth which follows option is nothing more than the complete agreement between *mind and life,* since the life here in question is subject to the law of change, and since it is not certain that our human nature, as such, is any different in this respect, I do not see how there can be any such thing as *absolute permanence* for any truth. From the last passage just quoted from Blondel's *Action* it follows that truth has only a *relative permanence.* Is this opinion not the same as the condemned Modernist proposition which reads as follows: "The truth is no more unchangeable than is man, since it develops with him, in him, and through him"? (Denz., n. 2058). The new definition of truth leads directly from Blondelism to Bergsonism.

How do the general principles of Blondel's philosophy permit him to maintain the proposition of the Antimodernist Oath concerning the proof for the existence of God?

The Oath says: "I profess that God can certainly be known, and also demonstrated, by the natural fight of reason . . . through visible works of His creation, as a cause by its effect." On page 347 of Blondel's *Action* we find the following statement: "I do not invoke any principle of causality; but I find in this imperfect knowledge of things and of my own thought, the presence and necessary action of a perfect thought and power." From such a

statement how could one prove that God is essentially distinct from the world, or that the words do not convey the idea of an immanent God à la Schleiermacher?

The oath speaks of the rigorous demonstration which leads to objective certainty of the existence of God—to a knowledge which is said to be true because it is in conformity with the affirmed reality, and not simply because it conforms to human life. On page 426 of *L'Action* we read: "In pointing out that this concept [of God], which most certainly originates in the consciousness, forces us to affirm, at least implicitly, the living reality of this infinite perfection, it was not at all meant that we thence conclude that God exists. It was a question of stressing the fact that this necessary idea of God as a real being, leads us to the *supreme alternative,* from which it follows that God does or does not exist for us in a real sense. It is this alone which is of supreme importance for us."

Some years ago, in a critical study of Fr. de Tonquédec's book, we examined more at length the general principles of Blondel's philosophy relative to the three operations of the mind: conception, judgment, and reasoning. We found in that philosophy a subjectivistic and nominalistic theory of the concept, which considers it to be purely an *"artificial abstraction,"* rendered necessary for the purpose of visualizing and systematizing the immanent appearance, and for the purposes of language. The judgment can have only practical truths, which means conformity of the thought with human life, and not with the reality affirmed. Finally, we find in Blondel's system the nominalistic theory of reasoning which is a necessary consequence of the conceptual theory. Like Sextus Empiricus, John Stuart Mill, and Hegel, Blondel writes: "The syllogism supposes 'intellectual atomism'; its apparent rigour rests on the theoretically false and practically useful hypothesis of partial identities, and is no more than an ap-

proximation." From which it follows that logic cannot have more than a "symbolic" value.

Concerning the proofs for the existence of God, it is not surprising, therefore, to find Blondel writing as follows: "A proof which is but a logical argument, always remains abstract and incomplete; it does not lead to being; it does not compel the mind to admit the necessity of the real." *(L'Action,* p. 341).

If, on the contrary, as the Antimodernist Oath declares, "the existence of God can be proved by the light of reason from visible things, as cause from effect," it seems impossible to pretend that "it is *by action* that all the incomplete arguments are united into a synthetic demonstration; taken by themselves," remarks Blondel, "they are sterile; united, the result is a demonstration." *(L'Action,* p. 341). It also seems silly to write: "The notion of a first cause, or of a moral ideal, the idea of a metaphysical perfection or of a pure act—all these concepts of human reason are vain, false, and idolatrous, if considered separately as abstract representations, but they become true, vivid, and effective as soon as they are united, and are no longer a sport of the understanding, but a *practical certainty.* ... It is in action alone that we must seek for the incontestable fact of being and the convincing proof of the same." *(L'Action,* p. 350).

But in what sense is this practical certainty an improvement upon the moral certainty of Kant, which was declared to be inadequate by the Fathers of the Vatican Council? We might say that it is, like Kant's certitude (to borrow his own terminology), "subjectively adequate, but objectively inadequate." If there is danger that the knowledge acquired by the senses and the intellect, when separated from action, may prove to be an illusion, may we not say that this action adds to the figment of the mind nothing but movement in the order of phenomena, and following in the wake of this movement, a chimerical joy

M. Laberthonnière has in mind is no more that of the intellect which recognizes that it is in agreement with the object it affirms *{veritas per conjormitatem ad rem),* but it is that certitude of the intellect which knows itself to be in agreement with the upright will. As Aristotle *{Ethic.,* VI, c. II) and St. Thomas *{Summa Theol.,* Ia, IIae, q. 57, a. 5, ad 3), express it: "The truth of the practical intellect depends on conformity with a right desire *{appetitus)."*

In Scholastic circles, this kind of certitude is called "practico-practical," and has nothing to do with metaphysics, nor with any of the speculative sciences, nor even with ethics, but belongs to prudence, a faculty which functions every time the necessity arises of deciding in the contingent events of life what is the just mean between the two extremes of excess and defect. This "practico-practical" certitude presupposes a speculative certitude of those principles by which the will is judged to be upright or good. This truth of the practical order, which consists in harmony with the upright will, may be in conflict with the reality. Not infrequendy, people who are more sincere than intelligent, with the best of intentions and in perfect good faith, defend statements that are theoretically false.

It is easy to see that this kind of experimental certitude is found also in two of the gifts of the Holy Ghost (wisdom and understanding), but these gifts presuppose faith and charity. All Catholic theologians distinguish with St. Thomas between speculative and experimental wisdom, this latter being the gift of wisdom. "Wisdom," says the Angelic Doctor, "implies a rectitude of judgment in conformity with the divine plans. Now this rectitude of judgment may arise from two causes: (1) it may be the result of a perfect use of reason; (2) it may be the fruit of a certain natural conformity which one has with those things about which one must judge. Take chastity, for example; one who is versed in the moral law, judges it in the light of reason; but one who is

habitually chaste, judges this virtue from the conformity of nature *(connaturalitas)* which he has with it. Therefore, in regard to divine things, it belongs to wisdom, as an intellectual virtue, to judge of these things by intellectual research. But if it is a question of judging about these same things according to a certain conformity between nature and them, this belongs to wisdom in so far as it is a gift of the Holy Ghost. For this reason Denis the Carthusian *(De Div. Nom.,* c. 2) declared that Hierotheus had arrived at perfection in the things which pertain to God, not only because he had acquired a knowledge of them, but also because he had experienced them in his own life *(non solum discens sed et patiens divina).* This sort of passivity, or conformity of nature with divine things, is *the result of charity,* which unites us to God, as the Apostle says (1 Cor. VI, 17): 'He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.' Hence the gift of wisdom has its cause in the will, which is charity, but its essence in the intellect, which has as its own proper act to judge correctly." (IIa, IIae, q. 45, a. 2). This is the true pragmatism, compared with which the pragmatism of modern philosophers is ridiculous. John of St. Thomas, in a series of brilliant dissertations on the gift of wisdom, has given us a full account of the nature of this judgment which operates "by way of connatural inclination." (See *Cursus Theol.,* in Ham IIae, disp. 18, a. 4). In this experimental knowledge of the things that appertain to God, not only does the will apply the intellect to consider the divine truths in preference to everything else (liberty of action), but from the fact that the will, acting under the divine impulse given to it by the virtues of faith and charity, has been completely transformed, divine things are considered by the intellect to be in *agreement with one's aspirations and good for one*—all the more as charity increases. Finally, they are held to be true, since they fully satisfy the desires which have been incomparably regulated by the divine light of faith, which rests on the authority of God, as pro-

posed by the Catholic Church. By charity, the object becomes a colourful reflection of the divine, or, as John of St. Thomas says, *"sic amor transit in conditionem objecti."* [33]

But let us not mistake this religious experience of the gifts, which presupposes charity, for faith, which precedes charity, and, above all, let us not confuse it with the natural knowledge of God, which precedes supernatural faith. If there is an analogous experimental certitude in the natural order, it presupposes the certitude of the *sensus communis* or spontaneous reasoning, which certitude is not experimental and does not differ from that furnished by the classical proofs, except by the difference which separates die implicit from the explicit.

We see that, for M. Laberthonnière, the affirmation that God exists is a free affirmation. We might view in the same way, as Fr. Chossat, S.J., remarks, our belief in a sense of duty, and say that it also is a matter of free choice. The will imposes the obligation. That we are absolutely in need of supernatural assistance before we can be certain of God's existence, must not, therefore, surprise us. (Laberthonnière, *Essai de Phil. Relig.,* p. 317). On this point Blondel writes: "It is not because we positively stand in need of the supernatural, and because it is a necessity arising from our human nature, but it is because nature

83 The defenders of the philosophy of action maintain that this *affective knowledge* more closely resembles what St. Thomas calls *perfect intellection,* which is not merely the representation of an object in the mind, a consideration of its essence, but the intellectual mastery of, the intimate union with, the possession of a being. There is something equivocal in this; for in perfect intellection, which means the beatific vision, intimate union with the divine essence is effected by simple vision or intuition, without any intermediary concept; beatific love is but a consequence of this, and docs not put us into possession of God. Charity plays quite a different role in the experimental knowledge of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This new interpretation of the teaching of St. Thomas would result in confounding the Thomist view concerning the essence of the beatific vision with that of Scotus, which is directly opposed to it. In this life, according to St. Thomas, the love of God is superior to the knowledge of God, whereas in Heaven, the reverse is true; for there the knowledge of God is immediate. (See *Summa Theol.,* la Ilae, q. *3,* a. 4; Billuart, *De Ultimo Fine,* diss. II, a. 2).

demands this as a necessity and because it is an exigency that is felt within us." (Quoted by Laberthonnière, *op. cit.).* Such statements are in agreement with the immanent method, which may be summed up in the sentence that nothing is imposed upon us from without.

Concerning this method, the Encyclical *"Pascendi"* says: "We cannot refrain from once more and very strongly deploring the fact that there are Catholics who, while repudiating immanence as a doctrine, nevertheless employ it as a system of apologetics; they do so, we may say, with such a lack of discretion, that they seem to admit in human nature not only a capacity and fittingness for the supernatural order—both of which Catholic apologists have always been careful to emphasize—but assert that it truly and rigorously demands the same." (Denz., 2103).

The sort of demonstration of the existence of God admitted by those who adopt the method of immanence—since they hold that the Scholastic proofs are inadequate—is practically a defense of the theory that, in our present condition, in order to be sure of God's existence (since human nature left to itself is incapable of this), we have an *absolute claim* upon the necessary help in the supernatural order. P. Chossat, S.J. *(loc. cit.,* cols. 864-870) points out that if some theologians admitted that, in our present condition, we cannot be certain of the existence of God without supernatural help, they were considering only the *actual fact,* or the conditions under which this natural potency operates, by which we acquire a knowledge of God; they did not deny this potency, nor in any way restrict its specification. They distinguished carefully between essence and existence, specification and operation, right and fact. What these theologians meant is that, in our present state, due to original sin, a supernatural help is required for the will to *apply* (operative order) the intellect to the consideration of God in preference to any other object, and also to eliminate *(removens, prohibens,* a purely negative process), the

moral dispositions which prevent us from perceiving the cogency of the proofs; but they did not maintain the necessity of this help for the will in the *order of specification,* so that it might contribute in some particular way to modify the proofs for the existence of God. They considered these proofs sufficient *just as they are.*

The distinction between specification and operation, between right and fact, can find no place in this new system of apologetics. The reason for this is that the defenders of this system have discarded the classical proofs for the existence of God as unconvincing, and have chosen to adopt the Kantian view, that reason *of itself,* by its very nature, cannot prove the existence of God with a certainty that is objectively sufficient. From this it follows that the supernatural—no matter what Blondel may say—not only makes its demands felt, but is also absolutely required by us. It seems, therefore, that this teaching of the modern school of apologists can no more be reconciled with the definition of the Vatican Council than could the views held by the Traditionalists of Louvain and the Fideists of Bautain's school. These apologists, though starting from different points, arrive at the same conclusions as those who held that the supernatural gifts belonged by right to the first man in a state of innocence, and who exaggerated the fall from original justice so as to admit with Luther, Calvin, Baius, Jansenius, and Quesnel, that reason is incapable of proving the existence of God.[34] The 41st proposition of Quesnel reads as follows: "All knowledge of God, even natural knowledge, even in pagan philosophers, can come only from God; and without grace produces only presumption, vanity, and opposition to God, instead of fostering acts of adoration, gratitude, and

84 Sec *Immanence,* by Fr. de Tonquédcc, pp. 149-166, where the author shows that Blonde! cannot avoid the error of Baianism except by falling into the more serious error of denying the ontological scope of reason.

love." (Denz., n. 1391). Abbé Laberthonnière expresses himself in almost the same way when, besides what he calls "the faith of love," he admits in certain others who reject God, "a faith of fear." "But to believe solely out of fear," he says, "is to believe and deny at the same time. Such faith is like that of an enemy believing in the existence of his enemy whilst hoping to crush him. Faith actuated entirely by fear, therefore, is not a sincere faith, because it contains within itself the desire not to believe. With it and by it, one plunges into darkness." *(Essai de Phil. Relig.,* p. 80). "They speak and write," justly observes P. Chossat, S.J., "as if all the theories evolved on these questions by Protestants, Jansenists, and even by otherwise orthodox theologians, were tenable at the present day. We ought not to forget, however, that the notion of tire supernatural, and especially the question of the possibility of acquiring certain knowledge about God by the natural light of reason, are not discussed from the same point of view to-day as they were forty or 400 years ago. . . . This fact fully explains why the *Essais* of Abbé Laberthonnière were put on the Index." *(Diet, de Théologie,* cols. 869-871). In 1913, all the volumes of *Les Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne,* from 1905 to 1913, were likewise placed on the Index for ventilating the same ideas as the *Essais.*

To present Blondel's views[35] in a more favorable light, Abbé Rousselot proposed the following interpretation: "In the most primitive and spontaneous operation of reason, analysis promptly discloses to us the certain assurance that it is possible for reason to form a clear notion of being, and also that one can get into such a frame of mind as to be satisfied with

85 Especially this proposition: "To believe that one can finally arrive at the idea of being, and legitimately affirm whatever reality there may be to it, without having gone through the whole process which originates from an intuitive perception of the necessity of God and of religious experience, means that one remains under an illusion."

oneself, with the world, and with life in general. This presumption (I use the word in no disparaging sense) is natural, essential to the intellect, an *a priori* condition of its existence, and, as it were, the vital principle of each of its particular intentions. Now, in addition to this, in the present state of our fallen nature, transmitted by Adam to all his descendants, this presumption, without a special grace of illumination for the intellect, is unjustified. . . . Without a revelation from above, without a cure in no wise due to human nature, the intellect cannot come into possession of the truth concerning its *real* destiny. There follows a deordination of the cognitive powers of the soul, which interferes with the proper functioning of these powers, and which, without rendering each of them false or 'spurious,' separates them from what ought to be their means of full development and for which they are truly intended. . . . Viewing things this way, we can understand how supernatural faith alone, considered as a perfection of the intellect, comes to the aid of natural reason, and gives to the knowledge that one may have of any object, its full right to such a claim." [36]

This interpretation recalls that of the older theologians refuted by St. Thomas in the Second Book of the *Sentences,* dist. 28, q. i, a. 5, and also that of Vasquez, generally combated by the Thomists,[37] and may be summed up in this statement: "Supernatural faith alone gives to the knowledge that one may have of any object, its full right to such a claim."

It seems scarcely possible to reconcile this proposition with that to which Abbé Bautain had to subscribe, to wit: "However feeble and obscure the light of reason may have become through original sin, it still retains sufficient clarity and power to lead us with certainty to the existence of God and to the

[86] *Dictionnaire Apologétique,* art. "Intellectualisme," col. 1074.
[87] See Gonet, O.P., *Clypeus Thomist., De Gratia,* disp. I, I, § 2.

revelation given to the Jews through Moses and to the Christians through our adorable God-Man." (Denz., n. 1627). In 1844, the Abbé Bautain had to promise "never to teach that reason cannot acquire a *true and complete certitude* concerning the motives of credibility, especially such as miracles, prophecies, and most particularly the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." (Denz., n. 434). In discussing the definition of the Vatican Council concerning the power of reason to acquire a certain knowledge of the existence of God, we pointed out that it was precisely human nature in its fallen state that was meant.[38] This knowledge, therefore, appears to be fully accounted for without grace.

If one wishes to adopt the method of immanence, one must not view it as an *exclusive* or *indispensable* method, so superior to all the others as to deserve first consideration. The classical arguments have demonstrative force without it, though we may say that it disposes one to consider them and it confirms them.[39]

This doctrine was commonly admitted by the Fathers of the Church and by all those who have defended, as we shall do later on, the proof for the existence of God derived from the soul's aspiration towards the absolute and infinite Good. (See proof from the gradation to be found in things, as applied to good: the first to be desired, the Sovereign Good, the source of all our happiness and the ultimate reason of all our obliga-

88 See Vacant, *Etudes sur le Concile du Vatican,* Vol. I, pp. 289 and 673. See also Denz., n. 1670.

so In so far as it prepares or disposes one to consider the arguments set forth by the other methods, the method of immanence enjoys a priority of time, but not of perfection or validity. It is natural for it to confirm afterwards what it has helped to establish. In the same way, we clearly express our ideas by means of mental images which always precede, and likewise emotion precedes the operation of the will, and then becomes the means by which we attain the desired end. St. Thomas remarks: "Just as capacity in the order of things generated precedes, and is a predisposing cause of, perfection, so also, once this perfection has been acquired, it remains as a natural effect of the same." (Illa, q. 7, a. 13, ad 2).

tions). We shall also see that the argument *based on love* or on *action* would be ineffective and objectively inadequate, if it did not take into consideration the *argument from intelligence,* which presupposes the ontological and transcendental validity of the principles of reasoning, and it is precisely this validity that is denied by the opponents of the classical proofs.

CHAPTER II

The Possibility of Proving the Existence of God

Our purpose is to point out that the Catholic Church has sound reasons for believing in the possibility of acquiring a knowledge of God by natural means. We shall, therefore, consider: (i) The possibility of proving the existence of God; (2) the proofs for the existence of God, and (3) the proofs for the principal attributes of God. Above all we shall strive to show that the traditional theodicy, conceived entirely from the point of view of the philosophy of being (an explanation and defense of the *sensus communis'),* retains its full validity to-day, and that its arguments lose none of their force because of the objections made either by the philosophy of Phenomenalism or that of Becoming; for, apart from the philosophy of being, these are the only two conceivable theories.

In showing the demonstrability of the existence of God we shall consider: (1) The genus and species of the demonstration it demands, (2) the objections raised against, and (3) the proof given for, this demonstrability.

SECTION I

WHAT GENUS AND WHAT SPECIES OF DEMONSTRATION DOES THIS DEMONSTRABILITY DEMAND?

7). *We are here concerned with a philosophical or, more precisely, a metaphysical demonstration. In the rigor of its proof*

and its power to convince, it must surpass the so-called scientific demonstrations of the present day.

It seems hardly necessary for us to point out that we do not claim to give a *scientific demonstration* for the existence of God, if by that term is understood, as is often the case nowadays, a process that does not go beyond the data of observation and experience. But if reason tells us that beings and phenomena, which are objects of experience, cannot explain themselves, but of necessity require the presence of a cause which renders them real and intelligible; if reason furthermore establishes the fact that this cause must be sought for beyond the limits of observation and experience—then we shall have a demonstration, not indeed scientific in the modern acceptation of the term, but philosophical or metaphysical. (See Zigliara, *Summa Philosophica,* Vol. I, p. 157). And if we also bear in mind, with Aristotle, that science does not really differ from ordinary knowledge, and that any branch of knowledge may be truly termed a science only when it gives the "why" or the necessary *raison d'etre of* what is affirmed, then we shall see that metaphysics merits the name of science far more than any of the so-called positive sciences. *"Scire simpliciter est cognoscere causam, propter quam res est et non potest aliter se habere," i. e.,* to know is simply to perceive the reason why a thing is actually so, and cannot be otherwise. *(Post. Analyt.,* Bk. I; Commentary of St. Thomas, 4th lesson).

The positive sciences cannot give us this *propter quid,* this *raison d'etre,* that would *make intelligible* the laws, which, after all, are but general facts. As Aristotle expresses it, they remain sciences of the *quia,* which means that they state the *fact* without being able to explain it, without giving the reason why it is so and not otherwise. The inductive method of reasoning, which can be traced back to the principle of causality, enables us to conclude with physical certainty that heat is the cause of the expansion of iron, but we do not see "why" this effect is to be assigned precisely

to this cause and not to any other. We account for the antecedent phenomenon merely by empirical and extrinsic processes of reasoning, and this is because we do not know why heat and iron are specifically constituted as they are. When positive science proceeds from general facts or *laws,* to explain the reasons for these laws, it can only provide us with temporary working hypotheses, which are not so much explanations as convenient representations apt to classify the facts. Scientists state that the distance traversed by all falling bodies through space is proportionate to the square of the time taken. That is a general fact or law; but what is the nature of the force that causes bodies to fall in this way? Are they driven towards one another or mutually attracted? If there is mutual attraction, how are we to explain it? It is a mystery. The laws according to which light travels have been discovered; but what is light? Is it a vibration of a rarefied medium, the ether, or is it an extremely rapid current of impalpable matter? Neither hypothesis claims to be the true solution, excluding the other as false. The scientist's only concern is to give a more or less convenient classification of the phenomena.

The intelligible element found in the positive sciences is to be explained by the fact that they have recourse to the metaphysical principles of causality, induction, and finality. Since their objects, as Aristotle has pointed out, are essentially *material* and *changeable,* they reach but the fringe of being, and consequently of intelligibility. *{Phys.,* Bk. II, ch. 1; Bk. VI, ch. 1). The objects accessible to our senses are hardly intelligible in themselves. They belong to the domain of the hypothetical and conjectural, to that which Plato termed δὀ£α (opinion). The intelligible world is the sole object of true science *{Iπίστ^μη).* In fact, the certitude properly called scientific grows in proportion as what one affirms approaches nearer to those first principles which are, as it were, the very structure of reason—the principle of identity implied in the

idea of being, that most simple and universal of all ideas, the principles of contradiction, causality, and finality. If the principle of identity and non-contradiction is not only a law of thought, but also of being, if the other principles (in order to escape the charge of absurdity) must necessarily be referred to it, then every assertion necessarily connected with such principles will have metaphysical or absolute certainty, and its negation implies a contradiction. On the other hand, no assertion relying solely on the testimony of the senses can possess other than physical certainty, and, finally, every assertion based on human testimony cannot have other than moral certainty. That is why, according to the traditional philosophy, metaphysics—the science of pure being and of the first principles of being—deserves to be called *"the first of all sciences,"* for it is more of a science than all the other sciences. The demonstration of the existence of God must, therefore, be *in itself* far more exacting than is usually the case nowadays with scientific demonstrations. It must not only establish, by reasons drawn from observation, that the world has need of an infinitely perfect cause, but also *why* it needs this cause and no other. Moreover, the reason given must not be a mere working hypothesis, but definitive; it must necessarily flow from the highest principle of our intelligence and from the very first of all our ideas, namely, that of being.

This demonstration, though far excelling the empirical demonstrations in point of rigor and certainty, will, however, not be so readily understood by us, at least when presented in scientific form. As Ajistotle remarked *(Met.,* Bk. I; Commentary of St. Thomas, Leet. 2; *Met.,* Bk. II, Leet. 5; Bk. VI, Leet. 1), the realities of sense perception are *in themselves* not so readily knowable, because they are material and changeable (the mind must abstract from material conditions, since they are a hindrance to intelligibility), but are more readily knowable *by us,* since they constitute the direct object of sensible intuition, and we acquire

our ideas through the senses. Metaphysical truths and realities of the purely intelligible order, though they are more easily knowable in themselves, are not so easily known *by us,* because sensible intuition cannot reach them. The image accompanying the idea is extremely deficient, and the idea which we obtain through the medium of the senses, is but an analogical expression of the purely intelligible reality.

Between the physical sciences (which abstract only from individual matter and consider matter in common, such as, for instance, the sensible qualities, not of any particular molecule of water, but of water in general), and metaphysics (which abstracts from all matter), is the science of mathematics (which abstracts from sensible qualities and considers quantity as either continuous or discrete). It is, to a certain extent, a combination of the rigorous exactitude of metaphysics and the facility of the physical sciences, because its proper object, quantity, on the one hand, may in itself be defined by terms that are intellectual and fixed, and, on the other hand, it may be adequately expressed by the ideas we derive from the senses, and made clear by appropriate illustrations. In this way a superficial aspect of being is presented to us, evidently very different from pure being, which is the object of metaphysics. We cannot claim to prove the existence of God by a *mathematical demonstration;* the nominal definition of God assures us that, if He exists, He does not belong to the order of quantity, because He is the first cause and final end, two aspects of causality with which mathematics is not concerned.

Our demonstration will, therefore, be more exact *in itself* than any empirical demonstration could be, but it will not be as easy to understand as is a mathematical demonstration; to grasp its full force, a certain philosophical training is required, and conflicting moral dispositions can prevent a man from perceiving its efficacy. “Some there are who do not grasp what is said to them,

unless it is presented in a mathematical form. Others refuse to accept anything that does not appeal to the senses. That which is more according to general custom is better known to us, for habit becomes second nature. Aristode observes that we must not expect the same degree of certitude from physics, mathematics, and metaphysics." (St. Thomas, Comment, in II Met., Leet. 5).

This difficulty, for the rest, applies only to the scientific form of the demonstration. Reason spontaneously rises to a certain knowledge of God's existence by a very simple inference derived from the principle of causality. The *sensus communis* need not bother itself with the difficulties presented by objectivity and the transcendental and analogical value of the principle of causality, but quite naturally arrives at a knowledge of the first cause, one and unchangeable, of multiple and changeable beings. The orderly arrangement of things in this world and the existence of intelligent beings prove that the first cause is intelligent; the moral obligation made known by conscience necessarily calls for a legislator; lastly, the principle of finality demands that there should be a supreme, sovereignly good end, for which we are made, and which, therefore, is superior to us. The manner in which we shall present the traditional proofs for the existence of God, from the point of view of the philosophy of being, (which in reality is but an explanation and vindication of the *sensus communis'),* makes it unnecessary for us to treat *ex professo* of the problems arising from spontaneous knowledge. The teaching of Catholic theology on this point will be found in the *Dictionnaire de Théol. Cath.,* art. "Dieu," cols. 874-923.

8) *This will not he an "a priori" demonstration. Insufficiency of the ontological proof.*

How shall we proceed in the philosophical demonstration of the existence of God? The Vatican Council tells us that it is

from created things that God can be known with certainty (e *rebus creatis certo cognosci potest).* We do not, therefore, as the Ontologists contended, come to know of God's existence and His attributes by a direct intuition of His essence. This vision is the ultimate crowning of the supernatural order. The created intellect, by its unaided natural powers, can by no means rise to such a knowledge; created and finite as it is, the intellect has for its proportionate object created and finite being, and possesses direct knowledge only of creatures. (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 12, a. 4). By means of created things it can come to know God, not indeed as He is in Himself, in that which essentially constitutes Him what He is *(quiddilative;* see *infra,* no. 32), not in the eminent simplicity of His Godhead, as if the intellect had an intuitive perception of this, but only in so far as there is an analogical similarity between Him and His works. The great number of analogical concepts derived from created things, to which we must have recourse in order to form an idea of God, is sufficient proof that we have not that immediate intuition of which the Ontologists speak.

Might not the existence of God be a self-evident truth *(veritas per se nota),* which needs not to be proved, as, for instance, is the principle of identity: "That which is, is," or the principle of contradiction: "What is, cannot at the same time and in the same sense be and not be"? Or at least, might it not be possible to give an *a priori* demonstration of the existence of God, abstracting from contingent realities? St. Anselm and the defenders of the ontological argument thought so. St. Anselm points out that existence is implied in the notion conveyed to the mind of every man by the word "God." When one fully realizes what is meant by that word, he says, one conceives of a being greater than which none can be conceived. But if such a being does not exist, then it is possible to conceive of another being, which has all the qualifications of the former, and which, in addition,

really exists, and so it would be greater than the being considered to be the greatest that can be conceived. Therefore, if we wish to retain the meaning that the word "God" conveys to the mind, we must affirm that God exists.

The proposition, "God exists" or "the most perfect being that can be thought of, really exists," is, according to St. Anselm, evident in itself and also for us *(per se nota quoad nos)*; and in this respect it does not differ from those other two principles, "That which is, is," and, "What is, cannot at the same time and in the same sense be and not be."

St. Thomas and many other theologians reject St. Anselm's view on this point. Without doubt, they say, *in itself (quoad se),* the essence of God implies His existence, since God is the necessary being and cannot but exist; but the proposition, "God exists," is not *in itself* evident *for us (quoad nos).* In fact, we do not know the divine essence such as it is in itself *(quidditative)*, we can reach it only by means of positive analogical concepts which reveal to us the traits it has in common with created things; but what it possesses as peculiarly its own, this we know only in a negative way (non-finite being) or relatively (supreme being). It follows that we know the Deity just as we know all other essences, in an abstract way. This abstract idea which the mention of the word "God" awakens in us, though it differs from all other ideas in that it implies aseity or essential existence *(existentiam signatam),* abstracts, like all other ideas, from actual or *de facto* existence *(ab existentia exercita).*

To the *a priori* argument of St. Anselm we reply by distinguishing the minor. St. Anselm says: If the most perfect being that can be conceived did not exist, it would be possible to conceive of a being which has all the qualifications of the former, plus existence, so that this latter being would then be more perfect than the most perfect being that can be conceived. I admit that if this being did not exist, and was not conceived as self-

existing, it would be possible to conceive one more perfect. But I deny the assertion that if it did not exist, though it was at the same time conceived as self-existing, then it would be possible to conceive of a more perfect being. Hence it is not logical to conclude: "Therefore, God exists"; all that can be logically concluded is: Therefore, God must be conceived as self-existing, and in truth does so exist, and is entirely independent of any other being, *if He exists.* (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 2, a. 1).

Descartes (MAZ., V, rép. aux object.) and Leibniz *(Méd. sur les Idées,* ed. Janet, p. 516; *Monadologie,* § 45) vainly endeavored to give to this argument, generally known as ontological, that logical exactness which it lacked. To regard it as conclusive in the form given it by Leibniz, two propositions would have to be established *a priori:* (1) that God is possible, and (2) that if He is possible, He exists. Now, whatever one may think of the second of these propositions (that it is possible to argue from logical *possibility* to a real *intrinsic possibility,* in virtue of the principle that the operations of the intellect have objective validity, and then from this *real possibility to actual existence)* the first proposition of Leibniz is certainly *not self-evident for us,* nor can it be demonstrated *a priori.* The only thing that Leibniz, like Descartes, can demonstrate is, that we cannot perceive the impossibility of the existence of God. So long as we have not a direct knowledge of the divine essence, we cannot give an intrinsic reason for this possibility, and never shall be able to do so. We must recall to mind what St. Thomas wrote against St. Anselm, and say: "Because we do not know of God what He is, we cannot know whether it is possible for Him to exist." Moreover, the idea of a being, the most perfect that can be conceived, necessarily demands certain absolute perfections, such as immutability and liberty, which seem incompatible. Herbert Spencer developed this objection, which is also one of the standard objections among theologians, at considerable length. Later

on we shall see that the *a posteriori* proof is not affected by it. Leibniz claims to have proved that the infinite being is possible, because the negative element, being excluded from that idea, removes from it the presence of contradiction. It was pointed out to him in reply, that there is nothing negative about the idea of the swiftest possible movement, which yet involves a contradiction.[1]

We cannot affirm the possibility of God *a priori.* We only know that our ideas of being, goodness, intelligence, liberty, acquired from finite tilings, can be applied by way of analogy to a reality of another order, and that if a reality of another order is required to account as *cause* for the finite beings from which we derived these ideas, that cause must necessarily have a similarity, at least analogical, to its effects. (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 4, a. 3; q. 88, a. 3; see *infra,* no. 29).

Fr. Lepidi *(Reçue de Philosophie,* Dec. 1, 1909) presented the ontological argument in a new way, which we are sorry we cannot give in full here. Notwithstanding the skill and profound learning displayed in this new method, it fails to answer satisfactorily the objections raised against Leibniz, and merely transforms the ontological argument into an argument based upon the contingency of finite being. Later on we shall show (nos. 20 and 38 d) that a trained metaphysician could interpret such a proof in a sort of intuitive sense: in that the intellect, fully understanding both the sense and the import of the principle of identity, the supreme law of thought and of the reality directly implied in the idea of being, would see *"quasi a simultanée"* (almost simultaneously) that the fundamental reality, the Absolute, is not this composite and changing universe, but a reality in every way identical with itself, *ipsum esse subsistens,* the self-

1 Sec *Revue Thomiste,* July, 1904, *"Note sur la preuve de Dieu par les degrés des êtres,"* by R. Garrigou-Lagrange.

subsisting being, and, therefore, essentially distinct from all that is by nature composite and subject tc change.

9) *The demonstration will have to be* a posteriori. *For it to be rigorously exact, it must start with a particular effect, and trace this effect bacl{ to its proper (i.e., to its necessary and immediate) cause.*

We cannot, therefore, demonstrate *a priori* that the essence of God is possible, and even less, that it exists; but there is another kind of demonstration, known as *a posteriori.* These two demonstrations, like every process of reasoning, proceed from the better known to the less known; but when we demonstrate anything *a priori,* the better known is at the same time not only the source, but also the *raison d'etre* of our knowledge. To demonstrate *a priori* means to give the reason why *(propter quid)* the predicate of the conclusion necessarily belongs to the subject. This demonstration presupposes that one knows the essence of the subject, which is the reason for what has been demonstrated as belonging to that subject. Thus, it is demonstrated *a priori* that man is free, because he is a rational being and knows, not only this or that particular good, but good in general.

The *a posteriori* demonstration, like the preceding, is a syllogism that results in a necessary conclusion; but here the better known is not the *raison d'être* of what we know by it; only in the order of things known by us does it come first; in the order of reality it is not dependent upon our knowledge. The knowledge of the effect necessarily leads us to conclude to the existence of the cause. This *a posteriori* demonstration does not tell us why *(propter quid)* the predicate of the conclusion necessarily belongs to the subject; it merely establishes *that (quia)* the predicate refers to the subject, that the cause exists. It does not give us the reason for what is affirmed by the conclusion, but only

the *raison d'être* of the affirmation of the object. Without knowing God as He is in Himself, as the ontological argument demands, we nevertheless can know by such a demonstration that He is. "To be can mean either of two things. It may mean the act of being, or it may mean the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject. Taking *to be* in the former sense, we cannot understand the being of God, nor His essence; but only in the second sense. For we know that this proposition which we form about God when we say God is, is true, and we know this from His effects." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2um). This *a posteriori* demonstration proving that God exists, in itself is superior to any empirical demonstration; for, as we have already remarked, it will have to explain just *tvhy* the world demands a cause corresponding to the nominal definition of God, and which cannot be attributed to any other cause. (See *supra,* no. 7).

This *a posteriori* demonstration, or demonstration from the effect, cannot be considered a strictly metaphysical process, unless it argues from the *proper effect* to the *proper cause,* which means to the necessary and immediate cause of the effect. "From every effect," says St. Thomas, "the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated; because, since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist." (la, q. 2, a. 2). "Every effect depends upon its cause, in so far as it is its cause." (la, q. 104, a. 1).

The proper cause in metaphysics is that which the Scholastics, following Aristotle, call *causa per se primo, i. e.,* the absolutely first cause. (See Aristotle, *Il Phys.,* c. iii; *V Met., c.* ii; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 45, a. 5; Commentary of Cajetan, q. 104, a. 1; John of St. Thomas, *In lam,* q. 44, *De Creatione,* disp. XVIII, a. 1 and 4).

These articles of St. Thomas, taken from his treatise on creation and the divine government of the world (conservation in

being and divine movement), are the veritable and indispensable commentary on the proofs for the existence of God as given in the first part of the *Summa Theologica,* q. 2, a. 2. Theological speculation follows the reverse order of philosophical speculation; it argues from God to created things, and discusses the great metaphysical problems concerning God and the world, not with reference to the existence of God, but as presented by creation, conservation, and divine movement.

Why does St. Thomas say: *"Ex quolibet effectu potest demonstrari propriam causam ejus esse* (from every effect the existence of its *proper cause* can be demonstrated)"? It is because, if any other than the *proper cause* is assigned, the demonstration is not conclusive. For instance, it would be false to argue: "This man exists; therefore his father exists also"; and yet the father is in a certain sense the cause of the existence of his son, who often survives him. In like manner, every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon; but frequently all trace of the latter is gone, whereas the former endures. The agnostics also refuse to acknowledge the principle of St. Thomas just mentioned, but say that from every effect it can be demonstrated, not that its cause exists, but that it has existed. Thus, they would argue that local movement presupposes a certain form of caloric energy which has disappeared; that another phenomenon preceded this one, and so on, *ad infinitum.*

The answer which St. Thomas would give to this would be that in the principle just mentioned the *proper cause* means that cause from which the effect necessarily and immediately proceeds. Now, if the proper causes of effects, however particular and momentary they may be, are also particular and transient, then the proper causes of universal and permanent effects are likewise universal and permanent, and hence belong to a higher order. For instance, to say that this particular animal is the direct cause of this other animal, does not suffice to explain die presence

of animal life on the surface of the earth, which compels us to have recourse to more important and general principles, such as the sun, which is the permanent source of the heat required for the generation of plants and animals, and for their continuance in life. In like manner, this particular motor, which was itself set in motion by something else, truly accounts for the presence of this movement, but it does not explain the movement in itself; and if this movement (wherever it may be found) does not contain in itself a sufficient reason for its existence, it demands a universal cause, constantly in action and of a higher order, a source of energy which does not stand in need of actuation or conservation, but which produces and conserves all movement in the universe.

This argumentation is based on Aristotle's profound analysis of the notion of the *proper cause,* which we were able to give only in a brief note, but which must be studied for a complete understanding of the demonstrability of God's existence.[1]

The principle here invoked, "that the proper effect demonstrates the existence of the proper cause," may in the last analysis be reduced to the principle of causality, which gives us the metaphysical aspect of being, and may be formulated thus: "That which exists, but not by itself, exists in virtue of some other being, which is self-sufficient." A contingent existence cannot have its completely sufficient cause in another contingent existence as dependent as itself; but both equally demand a necessary existence of a higher order.

The permanent causality which a being of a higher order exerts upon one of a lower order is called by the Scholastics *equivocal* or *non-univocal causality,* because it produces an effect which is not of the same nature as the cause. Thus heat is the proper cause, not only productive, but also preservative, of the expansion of bodies, of the fusion of solids, and of the vaporiza-

1 Sec Appendix I at the end of this book.

tion of liquids; electricity also has its own proper effects, which are, as it were, its properties *ad extra.*

This causality of the superior over the inferior is, of course, particularly manifest when in the hierarchy of being we consider the influence which one order exerts upon another, lower order, for instance, the influence of a living being upon nutritive minerals, which it transforms into organic substances; in the animal, the influence of sensation and desire upon the action aroused by this desire; in man, the influence of the intellect upon all the activities under its direction, and that of the will upon the other faculties under its control; in the sciences, the influence of principles upon conclusions. In all these cases the superior cause not only *produces,* but also conserves the effect. The evidence of principles not only engenders, but also preserves in us the evidence of conclusions; if the first disappears, then the second vanishes, just as light ceases at the setting of the sun. In the same way the attraction of the good which we perceive, stirs up and foments within us a desire for the same; especially is this the case concerning that good which we propose to ourselves as the ultimate end. When this idea of good ceases to be for us a source of attraction, then our desire itself and our activity are at an end; as long as the attraction lasts, it may buoy us up for years in our daily labors.

On the contrary, a succession of *univocal* or *specifically similar causes,* as, for instance, the temporal succession of human lives or of physical movements in the past, are at bottom but a series of effects coming from a higher cause; if the movement as such cannot be explained sufficiently in itself, it demands a prime mover, who in his turn does not have to be set in motion.

This is the deeper sense of the principle: universal and permanent effects have for their *proper cause* a cause that is universal, permanent, and consequently of a higher order. This cause may truly be called the first principle or highest foundation. Thus

we speak of the fundamental truth of philosophy, of the fundamental principles of the sciences, of the foundations of morality. If there is a first cause, it must evidently be a cause in this profound sense. Empiricism, which accepts only univocal causes, material or accidental, which denies the superior validity of the principles of reasoning, which rejects all foundations (the foundation of induction, that of the syllogism, that of morality, and that of society), must end by denying, or at least not affirming, the existence of God. For the Empiric, who is necessarily a Nominalist, as for the ordinary grammarian, the two propositions, "God is" and "Peter is," have about the same meaning; just as the world has no need of Peter, so it can get along without God.

Shall we fall into the other extreme, and return to the "ideas" of Plato, those supreme types, those "mothers" (see the *Timaeus'),* which Goethe, following his natural mysticism, resuscitated in the second part of *Faustï* Shall we admit the self-sufficiency of man? By no means. All the material elements implied in any definition (such as that of man) cannot exist apart from matter, which is their principle of individuation. (See no. 39). But it is not so with being, truth, goodness, intellect, and will; there is nothing material or even imperfect involved in their formal notions. This will naturally lead us to conclude that the *proper cause* of pure being and of all contingent realities, is a self-subsistent Being, which, for that very reason, is the Supreme Truth, the foundation of all truth, the First Intellect, which conceives the eternal types of things, the Sovereign Good and Supreme Love, and the pre-eminent Source of every good desire.

This idea of the proper cause of universal effects will assume concrete shape and thus become clearer in the general proof for the existence of God, derived from the contingency of existing things, and which may be summed up by saying that the greater

does not come from the less, nor the higher from the lower. (Cfr. no. 35).

10) *Therefore, it is not in a series of accidentally connected past causes that we must seep for the original cause, but in one in which there is an essential connection between the causes.*

From what was said above we see that the proofs for the existence of God, if they are to refer the effect back to its *absolutely necessary cause,* must not get hopelessly involved in a series of accidental causes. This mistake is frequently made by those who argue that the hen is the cause of the *egg,* and the egg the cause of another hen, and so on, indefinitely. St. Thomas can see no reason why there should be an end to such a series of causes. "It is not regarded as impossible to proceed to accidental infinity in efficient causes." (la, q. 46, a. 2, ad yum). It is only in the order of necessarily and actually connected causes, the holy Doctor continues, that we must of necessity arrive at a final cause. If a clock consisted of an infinite number of wheels, each one depending on another in ascending order, there would be in fact no principle of movement, and it would make little or no difference whether this clock were wound up a hundred times, a thousand times, or ever so many times; for the one who winds it up is only *per accidens* the cause of its movement. So also, in the example which St. Thomas gives, for the sound of the anvil we ascend first to the movement of the hammer, then to the movement of die blacksmith's hand, and, finally, to some first principle of this local movement. But it does not matter much whether the blacksmith makes use of an indefinite number of hammers: "An artificer acts by means of many hammers accidentally, because one after the other is broken. It is accidental, therefore, that one particular hammer acts after the action of another. In like manner it is accidental

to this particular man, in so far as he generates, to be generated by another; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man. . . . Hence it is not impossible for a man to be generated by man *in infinitum."* (la, q. 46, a. 2, ad yum). If the blacksmith takes up a different hammer each time he strikes the anvil, the causal action of each hammer is not necessary in order that the following one should be able in its turn to strike the anvil. Similarly, there is no need that the son in his turn should have children, for him to be dependent on his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and others as efficient causes. Neither does it seem to be metaphysically impossible for the world always to have been revolving on its axis; in this case there would have been no commencement of rotation; for, as St. Thomas remarks, *"Quaelibet circulatio praecedentium transtri potuit, quia finita fuit; in omnibus autem simul, si mundus semper fuisset, non-esset accipere primum., et ita nec transitum, qui semper exigit duo extrema,"* that is, "any of the previous revolutions could be completed, because it was of finite duration; but in all things that happen simultaneously, if the world had always existed, there would have been no beginning, and hence no transition, since this always demands the presence of the two extremes." (C. *Gentes,* l. II, c. 38). That there should be an actually infinite series of phenomena is not in itself an impossibility; for the series would be infinite *"a parte ante"* only, and finite *"a parte post."*

Aristotle, who held that the world and movement are eternal, said that this was an additional reason for assuming that there must be an eternal and infinite principle of all movement, capable alone of producing perpetual motion. As for St. Thomas, he taught that we know for certain only from revelation that the world had a beginning and is, therefore, not created *ab aeterno.* This depends entirely upon the divine will.[3] (la, q. 46, a. 2).

[8] To say that it is no sufficient reason why the divine will should create at

That in a series of accidentally connected causes we must finally arrive at the first of these causes, is not because we understand what is implied by the term *causality,* but simply for the reason that an actually infinite multitude is an impossibility. But, as St. Thomas remarks (la, q. 7, a. 3, ad qum; q. 46, a. 2, ad 6um and ad yum), there can be an actually infinite multitude only if all the units comprising it coexist simultaneously; but this is not the case with an infinite series in the past; because that which is past no longer exists. Moreover, while it is evident that an infinite number involves a contradiction in terms, it is very difficult to prove the impossibility of an actually infinite and *innumerable* multitude. In his opusculum, *"De aeternitate mundi,"* St. Thomas about the year 1264 wrote: *"Adhuc non est demonstratum quod Deus non possit jacere ut sint injinita in actu"* that is, "it has not as yet been proved that God cannot bring it about that there be infinite beings *in actu!'* In the *"Quodlibeta,"* which he wrote towards the end of his life, he recapitulates (No. 12, q. 2) with greater exactness what he had said on this point in the *Summa Theologica* (see la, q. 7, a. 4). The passage reads as follows: "To make something infinite *in actu,* or to bring it about that infinites should exist simultaneously *in actu,* is not contrary to the absolute power of God, because it implies no contradiction; but if we consider the way in which God acts, it is not possible. For God acts through the intellect and through the word, which assigns to all things their forms, and hence it must be that all things are formally made (that is, determined) by Him."

Finally, in his Commentary on the Physics of Aristotle (Book III, Leet. 8), St. Thomas, discussing the Aristotelian proofs for the impossibility of an actually infinite multitude (proofs which

this particular moment, rather than at any other, is to doubt whether there is such a thing as freedom. (See *injra,* Vol. II, ch. IV).

he himself had reproduced in his *Summa*[4]*),* emphatically says: "It must be observed that these arguments are *probable,* expressing the commonly accepted view; they are not, however, rigorously conclusive: because ... if anyone were to assert that any multitude is infinite, this would not mean that it is a *number,* or that it belongs to the species of number: for by number a multitude becomes measurable, as is stated in the tenth book of tire Metaphysics, and, therefore, number is said to be a species of discrete quantity; but this is not the case with multitude, which is of the nature of a transcendental."

Among those who admit that an actually infinite multitude is not an intrinsic impossibility, we must include Scotus, the Nominalists, Vasquez, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. The Jesuits of Coimbra, and Toletus (in the first part of his *Summa,* q. 7) defend as probable the opinion that the actually infinite is a possibility. Just recently Renouvier's argument for the finite has been refuted by Milhaud *{Essai sur les Conditions de la Certitude Logique,* p. 177). In our day mathematicians versed in the theory of transfinite *ensembles* are increasingly less disposed to accept as valid any of the arguments by which the notion of an actually infinite multitude is proved to involve an intrinsic contradiction.

It is important to note, therefore, that in any of the classical proofs for the existence of God, this disputed point must be taken into consideration. Just why we cannot proceed to infinity, is because there must be a sufficient reason, a cause. Even if we could go back to infinity in a series of past accidental causes, as, for instance, transformations of energy, or of generations of living beings, or of human beings: movement, life, the human soul would still have to be explained. These accidental causes are in themselves insufficient, and demand a further explanation. To

4 See Ia, q. 7, a. 4.

carry the series to infinity would not change their nature. As Aristotle remarked: If the world is eternal, it is eternally insufficient and incomplete; it eternally demands a sufficient reason for its reality and intelligibility. *(Met.,* l. XII, c. 6. See also Sertillanges, *"Les preuves de l'existence de Dieu et l'éternité du monde,"* four articles in *La Revue Thomiste* of 1897 and 1898).

This remark makes it unnecessary for us to discuss at length the first Kantian antinomy concerning the eternity of the world.

11) *In this series of essentially connected causes, we eventually arrive at one which must be the proper cause, without any further affirmation.*

The proper cause is that which is necessarily *(per se)* and immediately *(primo)* required. Of course, there are necessary causes which are not immediate causes *(per se non primo).* We can more readily understand the reason why of anything than we can discern its true cause. Aristotle says that the essence of the triangle contains the necessary though not immediate reason for the properties of the scalene triangle. These properties, in fact, necessarily presuppose that the scalene is a triangle, but they cannot be said to follow as an immediate deduction from the definition of a triangle; if such were the case, they would belong to every kind of triangle and not to the scalene *per se primo καθ' αυτό και y αυτό* (of itself and from its nature). *(Post. Anal.,* I; (Commentary of St. Thomas, Leet. II). The same holds good for metaphysical causality: for the *proper* effect of a cause is, as it were, one of its properties *ad extra,* existing by reason of something else, which is its principle of inherence. The proper effect bears the same relation to its proper cause, as property does to the essence upon which it necessarily and immediately depends. It is of this proper cause that Aristotle writes *(Post. Anal.,* I; Commentary of St. Thomas, Leet. 10: *"Quartus modus dicendi per se":* immediate necessity in the order of causality).

He gives as examples: "the murderer is the cause of death;" "the doctor cures one," "the chanter sings." If one were to say, "the man sings," this would *not* be an example of an immediate cause. To say, "the doctor sings," would be an example of an accidental cause, since it is purely an accident that he who sings happens to be a doctor.

Other more appropriate examples of the proper cause could easily be given. St. Thomas frequently refers to the fire which generates heat; to the light which dispels the darkness; to color which is the immediately predisposing cause (formal object) of sight, as sound is of hearing; to being, which is the direct object of the intellect as goodness is of the will. In matter of fact, it is by color that we see things, it is by sound that we hear, and things become intelligible to us according to the degree in which they participate in being, desirable in so far as they are good. Thus we may say that the *ens realissimum,* the absolutely Real Being, makes all things real, just as fire creates heat, and light, illumination, in the sense that the self-existing Being is the proper cause not of this or that mode of being, but of being in general. (See la, q. 45, a. 5). In like manner, the primary intelligent Being is the proper cause of our intelligence and of whatsoever intelligibility there may be in material things. The sovereign Good is the cause of all goodness, of all attraction to the same, and of all obligation, founded on the idea of good.

Many authors, in presenting the proof for the existence of God, argue from a cause which is not immediate, and as a result, their demonstration is not conclusive. If, for instance, it is a question of explaining the order in the world, we do not have to affirm the existence of an absolutely perfect being, but it is enough if we prove the existence of a primary intelligence disposing all things, one that is the proper cause of this order. In explaining local movement it is not necessary to arrive forthwith at the *"Actus Purus,"* but it is sufficient to show that there is a

mover which itself is not moved locally, as would be a world-soul (see Cajetan, *In lam,* q. 2, a. 2). if this soul is itself moved by some spiritual force, we must explain the difference in movement (which is movement in general and no longer a particular kind, such as local movement), by recourse to a prime mover of a higher order, which does not have to be started in its activity. But even this would not *immediately* prove the existence of an infinitely perfect being. To explain the existence of contingent beings, all that is required is to show the existence of a necessary being, but it is not necessary to prove immediately the existence of a personal, intelligent, and free God.

The five classical proofs given by St. Thomas (la, q. 2, a. 3) ascend *per se primo,* necessarily and immediately, to five divine predicates, to wit, (1) that there is a first unmoved mover of all things; (2) a first efficient cause; (3) a necessary and self-existent being; (4) the maximum in being; (5) the first of intelligent beings who directs all things to their predestined end. He then proceeds to show that these five predicates cannot be affirmed of anything corporeal (q. 3, a. 1), not even of a being composed merely of essence and existence, such as we find to be the case with spiritual beings of the finite order; but that they belong exclusively to the one who is Being itself *(ipsum esse subsistens,* q. 3, a. 5). In the fourth article of question 3 of the *Summa* St. Thomas finally proves that essence and existence are the same in (>od. This truth is the keystone of the two theological treatises in which God and Creation are discussed. Without it, the proofs for the existence of God cannot be said to be complete. The divine attributes—absolute simplicity, perfection and infinite goodness, immutability, eternity, uniqueness, omniscience, absolute freedom in regard to creation, omnipotence, universal providence, infinite beatitude—are all deduced from the single truth that God is the self-subsistent Being. From this it is also concluded that between God and the world there is this difference: He is essentially

simple, immutable, and incapable of further perfection, and therefore necessarily distinct from the world, which is essentially composite, changeable, and imperfect.

Such, then, is *metaphysical causality* (causality necessarily and immediately required), and it is only upon this solid basis that we can construct the *a posteriori* proofs for the existence of God: for, "the proper cause of anything can be demonstrated from any of its effects." The foundation of all these proofs is, therefore, the principle of causality, which may be expressed metaphysically by saying that "what is not *per se* or self-existing, necessarily depends upon some other being which *is* self-existing" *(f'quod est non per se, est ab alio, quod est per se"').*

SECTION II

OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST THE DEMONSTRABILITY OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. EMPIRICAL AND IDEALISTIC AGNOSTICISM

Before establishing, by means of a *reductio ad absurdum,* the necessity of the principle of causality as well as its ontological and transcendental validity, it seems preferable to us to state the objections raised against this thesis by Agnosticism. Empiric Agnosticism disputes the necessity of the principle of causality and also its ontological and transcendental validity; idealistic Agnosticism concedes to this principle merely a subjective necessity.

12) *The objection of the Empirics against the necessity and the ontological and transcendental validity of the principle of causality. This objection and the resulting Agnosticism are derived from Sensualistic Nominalism.*

Since the time of Hume the Empiric or Sensualist objection has undergone scarcely any change. The English Positivists, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and more recently William

James, simply repeat the old objection, while the French Positivists, Aug. Comte, Littré, and their followers, stress its materialistic origin and its antireligious consequences. The Neopositivists of the present day are related to Hume and Mill in much the same way as the Scholastics who lived after the thirteenth century are related to St. Thomas. We shall consider first of all, the leaders of this school of thought, especially John Stuart Mill, whose Nominalistic logic will enable us to discern the true sense and purport of the objection.

The Empirics deny: (1) that the principle of causality is a necessary truth, and (2) that this principle permits us to get away from the order of phenomena, in order to ascend to the first cause. Hume, following closely the teaching of the Epicureans, the sceptic Sextus Empiricus, Ockham,[1] Hobbes, and Berkeley, in reality denies intelligence, reason, or, what amounts to the same, he reduces it to the senses. According to his view, the idea expresses nothing more in itself than what is derived from the

[1] Sec Denzinger, n. 553-570, for the condemnation of the philosophical errors of Nicholas of Autrccourt, a disciple of Ockam. Amongst the errors that were condemned is the denial of the ontological validity of the principle of causality: *("Quod non potest evidenter evidentia praedicta ex una re inferri vel concludi alia res:* that we cannot from the aforesaid evidence evidently infer or conclude to the existence of one thing from another,") and the proposition that reduces to a purely hypothetical formula either the principle of contradiction or that of identity: *("Quod hoc est primum principium et non aliud: si aliquid est, aliquid est,* that there is no other first principle but this: if anything is, it is.") (Denz., 570). Concerning the external world, Nicholas of Autrccourt defended this thesis, which was also placed under censure: *"Quod de substantia materiali alia ab anima nostra non habemus certitudinem evidentiae:* Apart from our own soul we cannot conclude with evident certainty about any material substance." (Denz., 557). In short, the only evidence and certainty which he admitted were ot the logical order. His proposition: *"Quod certitudo evidentiae non habet gradus* (that evident certainty admits of no degrees)" was also condemned. (Denz., 556). As for created causality, his teaching is summed up in the following propositions: *"Nescimus evidenter quod alia a Deo possint, esse causa alicujus effectus: quod aliqua causa causet efficienter, quae non sit Deus:* we have no direct evidence that anything other than God can be the cause of any effect" and, "that there should be, besides God, any other efficient cause." (Denz., 566). From this we see dial after the Middle Ages Nominalism ended in scepticism.

senses and the imagination. It is merely an image under a common name. This constitutes the very essence of empirical Nominalism. "All our general ideas," says Hume, "are in reality but particular ideas to which a common term is assigned, and this latter occasionally recalls other particular ideas which correspond in certain respects to the idea that the mind actually has." 2 The idea, according to him, expresses nothing more profound than what the senses and the imagination furnish—it is solely *an image accompanied by a common name.* This is the essence of Empiric Nominalism. According to this sensualistic principle, if what the senses perceive is merely a succession of phenomena, *the idea of cause* is nothing else but a *common image* of phenomena that succeed each other, to which the common name of cause is assigned; all the rest cannot be anything more than *verbal entity.* In fact, Hume points out that, by means of the external senses, we perceive only phenomena followed by other phenomena instead of the causes of phenomena. "One billiard ball impinges upon another, and this other one moves; the senses tell us nothing more. . . . A single case, a solitary experience, in which we observed that one thing happened after some other, does not justify us in formulating a general rule and predicting what will happen in similar cases. It would be, indeed, unmitigated temerity to judge of the whole course of nature from a simple experience, however exact and certain this might be. But when we have seen on every occasion, that two mutually related phenomena follow each other, we have not the slightest hesitation in predicting the one from the appearance of the other. We call one of these the *cause,* the other the *effect.* We take it for granted that there is some connexion between them. We say that there is in the first a *potver,* by which it can produce infallibly the other. . . . How did this new idea, therefore, of a relationship, originate in the mind? In no other way did this

2 *An Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding,* Part II, Section XII, note.

come about but because of the *sentiment* which we have in our imagination of the connexion between these facts, and of the tendency which urges us to foresee the existence of the one from the appearance of the other." *(Essay on the Human Understanding,* VII).

But whence comes the idea of this *force,* of this *power* attributed to the cause in producing the effect? Hume explains it by the contact which is established between inanimate things and the sentiment of resistance or the feeling of effort that we experience whenever our body gives rise to, or, on the contrary, opposes movement. "A living being cannot move external objects without experiencing the feeling of a *nisus,* of an effort; likewise, every animal receives an impression or feeling of shock from every external object that is moved. These sensations, which are exclusively of the animal order, and from which we cannot *a priori* draw any inference, we are, nevertheless, inclined to transfer to inanimate objects and to suppose that these objects experience feelings somewhat analogous, whenever they impart or receive movement." *(Ibidi).* Are there any grounds for believing that the relation between cause and effect is anything more than an *invariable succession?* Not at all, answers Hume, for even in the domain of internal experience we have not the slightest means of knowing whether the voluntary effort that we experience is really what produces the corporeal movement which follows. This voluntary corporeal movement is not even the immediate result of volition. It is separated from it by a long chain of causes which we have neither known nor willed (movements of certain muscles, of certain nerves, and of animal spirits).

For Hume, therefore, causality, in the final analysis, is but the succession of two phenomena. We are led to believe that this succession is invariable; but this belief is merely the result of a habit. So far as we know, there has always been a succession of contingent facts; but we have no assurance tliat it must always

be so. Moreover, granted that causality accounts for, and always will account for, all the phenomena of the universe, what right have we to argue from this to a first cause situated beyond the world of phenomena? Arguing from this Sensualistic principle, Hume, like Berkeley, is led to deny the existence of matter; his only realities are sensations, phenomena without a substance. The same must be said about the mind. By a strange contradiction, Hume, in the beginning of his *'Natural History of Religion,* esteems and appreciates the proof for the existence of God drawn from the order found in nature. "The wondrous arrangement in the whole of nature," he says, "speaks to us of an intelligent Designer; and there is no philosophical thinker who can, after serious reflexion, for one moment suspend his judgment when he has placed before him the first principles of Deism and of natural religion." (Concerning this contradiction, see *Hume, His Life and Philosophy,* by Thomas Huxley).

We find the confirmation and development of this same doctrine in the works of John Stuart Mill. He starts from the same principle: that concepts are but concrete images to which a common name is given. *{Philosophy of Hamilton,* pp. 371-380; *Logic,* I, p. 119). From this is deduced the principle of causality. Mill premises *{Logic,* III, ch. 5, § 2) that he does not mean "to speak of a cause which is not itself a phenomenon. I make no research," he says, "into the ultimate or ontological cause of anything. To adopt a distinction familiar in the writings of the Scotch metaphysicians, and especially of Reid, the causes with which I concern myself are not *efficient,* but *physical* causes. . . . Of the [efficient] causes of phenomena, or whether any such causes exist at all, 1 am not called upon to give an opinion. . . . The only notion of a cause which the theory of induction requires, is that which can be gained by experience. The law of causation, which is the main pillar of inductive science, is but the familiar truth that invariability of *succession* is found by observation to obtain

between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it, independently of all considerations respecting the ultimate mode of *production* of phenomena." From this entirely empirical point of view "the cause of a phenomenon is an antecedent and invariable phenomenon; or, better still, is the whole of these antecedents; and we have, philosophically speaking, no right to give the name of cause to one of them, exclusively of the others." Finally, the succession (of facts in nature) must not only be invariable in the manner that night follows day, it must also be *unconditional.* This leads Mill to conclude that the distinction made between agent and patient is an illusion.[3] It is the principal objection of the Modernists against the traditional proofs for the existence of God that "the distinction between mover and moved, movement and the object moved, and the affirmation of the ascendancy of action over potency, all start from the same commonly accepted postulate, the postulate of morcellation."[4] The passage deserves to be quoted, because it shows clearly how Empiricism leads fatally to Radical Nominalism, since it freely admits that whatever is not immediately grasped by the senses results in *verbal entity.* "In most cases of causation," says Mill, "a distinction is commonly drawn between something which acts and some other thing which is acted upon; between an *agent* and a *patient.* Both of these, it would be universally allowed, are conditions of the phenomenon; but it would be thought absurd to call the latter the cause, that title being reserved for the former. The distinction, however, vanishes on examination, or rather is found to be only verbal: arising from an incident of mere expression, namely, that the object said to be acted upon, and which is considered as the scene in which the effect takes place, is commonly included in the phrase by

3 His own words on this point are: "The distinction is found to be only verbal."

1 Le Roy, *"Comment se pose le problème de Dieu,"* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* March, 1907.

which the effect is spoken of, so that if it were also reckoned as part of the cause, the seeming incongruity would arise of its being supposed to cause itself. . . . Those who have contended for a radical distinction between agent and patient, have generally conceived the agent as that which causes some state of, or some change in the state of, another object, which is called the patient. . . . But to speak of phenomena as states of the various objects which take part in them, is simply a sort of logical fiction, useful sometimes as one among several modes of expression, but which should never be supposed to be the enunciation of a scientific truth." *{Logic,* III, ch. 5, § 4).

It is in his *Essays on Religion* (first part, written in 1868 and 1870), that Mill gives us the conclusions from his Sensualistic and Nominalistic principles. He begins with the admission that "there is nothing in scientific experience that is incompatible with the belief that the laws and the successions of facts should themselves be the result of a divine volition" (p. 127). But of what value is the argument of a first cause? "Experience properly interpreted tells us only this: that all change proceeds from a cause, and that the cause of all change is a previous change. . . . But there is in nature an element or rather permanent elements (matter and force), and we do not know whether these elements ever had a beginning. Experience affords us no proof, not even an analogy, which would justify us in asserting that a generalization based upon our experience of variable phenomena has established for us what seems to be the immutable. . . . Besides, since all change has its cause in a previous change, our experience, far from providing us with an argument in favour of a first cause, seems to militate against it, and make us incline to the view that the very essence of causality, such as we know it to be according to our limited capacity, is incompatible with the idea of a first cause" (p. 133).

Because of his Nominalistic principles, Mill likewise rejects the

syllogism which, from the fact that there are human intelligences and consciences, argues by the method of causality that there is a first intelligence and conscience. On this point he writes: "If we say from the fact alone that there is such a thing as intelligence, that this demands as its pre-requisite antecedent the existence of an Intelligence far greater and more powerful, the difficulty is not removed by this one regression we have made. The creative intelligence, just as much as the created one, demands another intelligence to explain its own existence" (p. 140). Hence, what a Nominalist understands by intelligence is not an *idea* that can be applied to *being,* and by which we could identify the self-subsisting Intelligence with the self-subsisting Being; but it is merely a *common image,* with a *name* assigned to it, which refers to phenomena and not to being.

Mill plunges even deeper into Empiricism. "What proof have we," he asks, "that only the intellectual can produce that which is intellectual? Have we any other means but experience, for knowing what thing produces another of its kind, what causes are capable of producing certain effects? . . . Apart from experience and especially for what goes by the name of reason, which is concerned with the self-evident, it seems that no cause can produce an effect of a higher order than itself. But this conclusion is entirely different from anything we know about nature. Are not the vegetables and the superior species of animals far nobler and more precious, for instance, than the soil and the pastures upon which they depend and from which they draw their nourishment for their growth? The purpose of all the researches of modern science is to convince us completely that the higher forms of life arc evolved from the lower, and that the more elaborate and superior organization in life must yield to the inferior" (p. 142). This is the same as saying that the greater comes from the less, that being springs from non-being, that the intellectual life is the result of a material and blind fatalism, that the thoughts of the

man of genius and the charity of the saints originate from a lump of dirt.

However, Mill acknowledges that there is considerable probability for the proof of God's existence drawn from the evidence of design in nature. In fact, as we shall see later on, this proof, in his opinion, is an inductive argument corresponding to the method of congruencies, "a poor argument in most cases, but also at times a rather forceful one, especially when it concerns the delicate and complicated dispositions of the vegetative and animal life" (p. 162). This means that, according to the laws of induction and the present development of science, the most probable cause of the organic structure of the eye or the ear is not "the survival of the fittest," but a pre-ordaining intelligence.

Mill is thus logically led by the principles of Empiricism to admit that there are not really any convincing proofs for either theism or atheism. He strives even to prove that the attributes of the God of Christians, especially omnipotence and wisdom, cannot be reconciled; here, too, all his arguments are drawn from the empirical point of view. According to his theory, our imagination affords us glimpses of a God who exists, who is just and good; now it is not unreasonable for anyone who thinks so, to let himself go still farther and hope that this God exists, provided he recognizes that, if there are any reasons for hoping that it is so, there are no proofs (p. 227).

It is from his Nominalistic thesis on causality that John Stuart Mill draws all these conclusions.

The same thesis, though in a somewhat modified form, was accepted by Herbert Spencer. Mill, who was an idealist of the Berkeley type, did not admit the existence of an external world and believed that the principle of causality, like the other principles, is established by the repetition of the same psychic phenomena in each individual conscience. Spencer, on the contrary, admits the world of external things and considers the so-called

principle of causality as the result of a habit which men have formed by having witnessed the constant succession of the same phenomena. He, moreover, invokes heredity, in order to explain the tendency which we experience from birth to regulate our conduct and our reasoning in accordance with this principle. 1Ic writes as follows: "Habitual psychical successions entail some hereditary tendency to such concessions, which, under persistent conditions, will become cumulative in generation after generation, and this supplies an explanation of the so-called forms of thought." *(Principles of Psychology,* Part 4, ch. 7, 3rd ed., vol. I, p. 466). Thus the vast edifice of our judgments is the result of experimental perceptions, the consolidated accumulations of centuries, just as our continents were formed by the aggregation of almost imperceptible zoôns. According to Spencer, there is a difference of degree only between animal sensation and the intelligent acts of men. "It is certain," he says, "that amongst the automatic acts of the lowest forms of beings and the most highly developed conscious acts of human beings, we could set forth an entire series of acts manifested by the divers species of the animal kingdom, in such a manner diat it would be impossible to say of any particular stage in the series: here intelligence begins." 5 Here indeed we find the explanation of the Positivist objection against the demonstrability of the existence of God: it is the subversion of the foundations of reason. (See solution in nn. 15, 18, 25, 29).

Spencer's Agnosticism is but a logical consequence of this Nominalism. "It is impossible," he writes, "to avoid making the assumption of self-existence somewhere; and whether that assumption be made nakedly (Theism), or under complete disguises (Pantheism, Atheism), it is equally vicious, equally unthinkable. . . . We find ourselves obliged to make certain assumptions; and yet we find these assumptions cannot be repre-

0 Quoted by Th. Ribot, *La Psychologie Anglaise Contemp.,* 3rd ed., p. 199.

seated in thought. We are obliged to conclude that a first cause, infinite, absolute or independent, does exist; however, the materials of which the arguments are built, equally with the conclusions based on them, are merely symbolic conceptions of the illegitimate order." *(First Principles,* pp. 30-32). This means that our ideas are merely common images that go by a certain name (Nominalism), images which refer directly to sensible phenomena, and which we, without any right, attribute to the absolute.

Taking up the Kantian *antinomies,* Spencer goes on to say "that the fallacy of our conclusions becomes manifest through their mutual contradictions. The absolute, as such, cannot be a cause; it would be related to its effect. If you say that it exists first by itself, and afterwards becomes a cause, you are confronted with another difficulty: for how can the infinite become that which it was not from the first? If you say that this can be so because it is free, then you again contradict yourself; for freedom supposes consciousness, and consciousness, being only conceivable as a relation, cannot belong to the absolute. The fundamental conceptions of traditional theology are self-destructive. The absolute cannot be conceived as conscious, neither can it be conceived as unconscious; it cannot be conceived as complex, neither can it be conceived as simple; it cannot be identified with the universe, neither can it be distinguished from it. There is the same antagonism manifested between infinite justice and mercy, between wisdom which knows all that is to come, and freedom, between infinite power and goodness, and the existence of evil. Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism are wholly unthinkable." *(First Principles,* pp. 33-37).

But these three systems and the religions diametrically opposed to them, Polytheism and Monotheism, agree in recognizing that the facts of experience call for an explanation, and the "belief in the omnipresence of something which surpasses understanding, common to all religions, not only becomes more and more distinct

in proportion as there is further development of thought in the religions, but it also remains after the various elements have mutually nullified each other; yet, it is this belief that the most merciless criticism of all religions allows to remain, or rather sets out in bolder relief" (pp. 37-39).®

Further on we shall show (nos. 29, 39, 70) that these alleged contradictions pointed out by Spencer are the result of his Nominalistic Empiricism, which makes it impossible for him to conceive the divine attributes analogically. The *univocal* and *simple* conception that he is necessarily led to form of them, must inevitably result in contradiction.

William James has made no new contribution to this subject. Concerning the traditional proofs for the existence of God he writes: "I will not discuss these arguments. The bare fact that all idealists since Kant felt entitled either to scout or to neglect them, shows that they are not solid enough to serve as religion's all-sufficient foundation. Causation is indeed too obscure a principle to bear the weight of the whole structure of theology. As for the argument from design, see how Darwinian ideas have revolutionized it. The benevolent adaptations which we find in nature, being only fortunate escapes from almost limitless processes of destruction, suggest a deity very different from the one who figured in the earlier versions of the argument." *{Religious Experience,* pp. 437-438). Of the divine attributes he regards those known as metaphysical, as meaningless. "Our conception of these practical consequences," he says, "is for us the whole of our conception of the object" (p. 445). A few lines further on he says: "God's aseity, his necessariness, his immateriality, his simplicity, his indivisibility, his repudiation of inclusion in a genus, his infinity, his metaphysical personality, his relations to evil, being permissive and not positive, his self-sufficiency, self-love, and ab-

® I have been unable to find the exact equivalents of these quotations in the English edition.—*Tr.*

solute felicity in himself:—candidly speaking, how do such qualities as these make any definite connection with our life? And if they severally call for no distinctive adaptations of our conduct, what vital difference can it positively make to a man's religion whether they be true or false? . . . Verbality has stepped into the place of vision, professionalism into that of life. Instead of bread, we have a stone; instead of a fish, a serpent" (p. 445 f.). He even thinks "that a final philosophy of religion will have to consider the pluralistic hypothesis [Polytheism] more seriously than it has hitherto been willing to consider it" (p. 526). As for the moral attributes, "as spiritual assets they are bound up closely with pragmatism; for the tree is known by its fruits. But this idea of a practical fecundity likewise vanishes in the universal flux of empirical evolution. The moral and religious ideas undergo a change," as their insight into nature and their social arrangements progressively develop. "After an interval of a few generations, the mental climate proves unfavourable to notions of the deity which at an earlier date were perfectly satisfactory" (p. 328). From his further comments on this subject we understand James as meaning to infer that formerly the cruel appetites of a sanguinary god were proofs of his reality in the eyes of his devotees, and that, like us, they judged the tree by its fruits. What remains, then, of the fabric of religion? Nothing but personal experience and those direct assertions that we make in its name. James arrives at practically the same conclusion as Spencer, when he writes: "What the more characteristically divine facts are, apart from the actual inflow of energy in the faith-state, I know not. . . . The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also," *ennobling and transforming it* (p. 519).[7] This un-

7 The words in italics were added by the French translator of this passage.

knowable transcendental world is none other than the subconscious or subliminal self, and it is this subconsciousness that James calls God.

The French Positivists, following Comte and Littré, have generally regarded the investigation of the problem of God not only as useless, but also as dangerous. For A. Comte, *e.g.,* this problem, is vain, since the author of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (see 5th ed., Vol. Ill, p. 623) holds "that there is no essential difference between man and the brute beast, and hence we must say with Gall, that sensation, memory, imagination, and even judgment, are but various degrees of one and the same phenomenon that manifests itself in each of the truly elementary functions of the brain" *(ibid.,* Ill, p. 627). The intellectual and moral phenomena belong properly to animal physiology. This teaching spells the abandonment of all our metaphysical theories, since *"purely verbal entities* would be superseded continually by real phenomena" *(ibid.,* Ill, p. 616). To be true to his principles, Comte ought to see in the real simply what corresponds to the capacity of animals, and nothing more; for what distinguishes the animal from man, as Rousseau, following Aristotle, remarks, is precisely "that it cannot attach any meaning to the little word *is."* Comte is naturally led to conclude that "the traditional demonstrations for the existence of God must yield to the attacks of adverse criticism" *(ibid.,* V, p. 590). Moreover, this belief in God is useless and dangerous. "Artfully to contrive by vain and laborious methods, first of all to bolster up the religious principles so that, thus deprived of all intrinsic and immediate force, they may serve as die basis of the moral order, would not this be, henceforth, like arguing in a vicious circle? . . . Beliefs, themselves incapable of resisting the universal development of human reason, could, therefore, serve no truly useful purpose; for, certainly, reason in its full vigour would not fetter itself again with those oppressive shackles which in its adolescent stage it had once for

all completely severed. . . . Most of the time, does not the practical tendency of religious beliefs in the present condition of society chiefly consist in instilling into the hearts of the greater number of those who still hold somewhat tenaciously to these beliefs, a certain instinctive and insurmountable hatred for all those who have liberated themselves from the same, without, moreover, anything useful accruing to society from this form of emulation?" [8] The spirit of the present day is to recognize no other cult but that of Humanism.

Is it necessary for the theologian to have received the gift of discernment of spirits, in order that he may correctly judge whether this extract from the writings of August Comte proceeds from the love of God or from pride?

Littré is of the same opinion. "Science," he says, "does not declare that there is no God, but that everything happens as if there were no God. Positive philosophy accepts this declaration, and refuses to discuss further what can neither be known from experience nor in any way proved." *{Philosophie Positive,* VI, 159). "Kant and the Nominalists have made of the metaphysical arguments a *tabula rasa" {ibid.,* I, p. 238), "for the *metaphysical entities* are purely imaginary, and they can in no way be verified as facts; the existence of God deduced from them, has no more reality than they have" *{ibid.,* X, p. 14). Continuing in this strain, he writes elsewhere: [9] "Why, then, obstinately persist in inquiring whence you came and whither you are going; whether there be an intelligent, free and good creator? . . . You will never find out anything at all about that. Give up such vain chimeras. . . . Man's perfection and that of the social order consists in paying no attention to such things. The mind becomes clearer in proportion as it allows these so-called problems to remain in greater obscurity. These problems are a disease, which is cured simply by

[8] *Cours de Philosophie Posit.,* IV, pp. 106-7.
[*] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1st June, 1865, p. 686.

not thinking of such things." We find the same ideas expressed in the writings of the Neo-Comtistes, Lévy-Bruhl and Durkheim.

More recently the question of God's existence has again been brought up by Le Roy in his defence of the Positivist objections against the traditional proofs.[10] Le Roy adopts the Bergsonian type of Sensualism or Nominalism. "The general idea," he says, "is due to the way in which our nervous system is constituted, the apparatus of perception being of very different kinds, all closely related through the medium of the centres with the same motor phenomena. Abstraction is, therefore, a setting-in-relief due to a motor phenomenon." *(Matière et Mémoire,* pp. 168-176). "The idea is but a mediating image." *(Evolution Créatrice,* p. 327). "Of becoming in general I have but a verbal knowledge" (p. 322). From this point of view, Le Roy is drawn to conclude with John Stuart Mill that "all the proofs for the existence of God are based upon the purely utilitarian principle of morcellation, introducing a distinction between mover and moved, movement and the object moved, potency and act . . . Substances and things are but *verbal entities,* by which we 'objectify' and mobilize the universal flux; they are convenient arrangements and simplifications for the *name* and action implied. ... If the world is a vast connected whole of unceasing transformations, one need not think that this graduated and far-stretching cascade of happenings necessarily demands a first source. ... To affirm the primacy of act is a tacit admission of the same postulates. If causality is merely the outpouring of a full into a void, the reception by one object of the communicated contents of another, in one word, if it is the anthropomorphous operation of an agent, then well and good! But of what value are these idols of the practical imagination? Why not simply identify being with becoming?"

10 "Comment se pose le problème de Dieu," in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* March, 1907.

Le Roy also invokes the Kantian objection which shall be discussed later on in this work: that to arrive at any conclusion, the traditional proofs must inevitably have recourse to the ontological argument. God, according to Le Roy, is "a reality in the becoming," who as yet is not and never will be, and who is transcendental merely in name. "Immanence and transcendence correspond to two moments in duration: immanence to what has become, transcendence to what is becoming. If we declare that God is immanent, this means that we consider Him in the light of what he has become in us or in the world; but for the world and for us He ever remains an *infinite in becoming,* an infinite, which is creation in the true sense, not mere development; and viewed in this way, God appears to be transcendental." 11 We wonder whether the author grasped the full import of these words, for, as we have already remarked, his conclusion is manifestly opposed to what was defined by the Vatican Council. (See nos. 4 and 5).

We see what this objection of the Positivists against the possibility of proving the existence of God amounts to. Nothing new has been added to it since the time of Hume, who reduced every idea to a common image with a name, and causality to a common image of an invariable succession of phenomena, called by the name of cause. Everything which is not directly grasped by the senses and the conscience is but a *verbal entity,* and as for reason, there is no such thing. Apart from the phenomenal order, the principle of causality is valueless; and even here we have no assurance that it must be always referred absolutely to this order.

13) *Kant's objection against the ontological and transcendental value of the principle oj causality.*

The Kantian theory of knowledge likewise undermines the foundation of the traditional proofs for the existence of God.

11 *Rev. de Mét. et Mor.,* July, 1907, p. 512.

Kant rejects Empiricism, because all idea of necessity is eliminated from this system and for Kant, Newton's physical laws, and also the moral law, are a necessity that cannot be doubted. But in his opinion, Dogmatic Rationalism is wrong in claiming to have an *intuition of the intelligible,* and to be able by a scientific process of reasoning to conclude that *causes* and *substances* exist; he becomes involved in antinomies whenever it occurs to him to approach these problems. On this point the Empirics are right, and Kant is wrong. Metaphysics has not succeeded in establishing itself as a science, and never will do so; for that is impossible. The only science is that of phenomena and the Newtonian physics imposes itself upon us as a necessity. How shall we explain this necessity of scientific knowledge? We know from experience that a connection exists between facts, but experience tells us nothing about the necessity for this. It must, therefore, be the mind which, by consulting its categories of substance, causality, reciprocal action, etc., concludes that there is a necessary connection between phenomena. These categories enable us to establish *a priori* contacts between phenomena, or to form what Kant calls "synthetical *a priori* judgments."

The principle of causality, by which metaphysicians claim to arrive at the idea of a first cause, is only one of these "synthetical *a priori"* principles. We must agree with Hume in admitting that the proposition, "Everything which happens has a cause," is not an analytical judgment, for the predicate is not included in the idea of the subject. Nor is it a purely explicative judgment, which merely develops the notion of the subject in order to reveal the presence of the predicate, as, for instance, when we say, "What contradicts something does not apply to it," or, "All bodies are extended." It is an extensive judgment which really adds to the sum of knowledge, and therefore, is synthetical, as too is this other judgment, "All bodies are heavy"; but at the same time we are compelled to accept it as an *a priori* judgment, rendered neces-

sary by the exigency of science. It might be expressed by the following formula: "All changes take place in accordance with the law of connexion between cause and effect"; it applies only to the world of phenomena and does not justify us in attributing all these changes to a cause of another order, which is not itself also a change. *(Critique of Pure Reason,* Introduction, § IV; *Transcendental Analytic,* II, c. 2, sect. 3, n. 3; *Transcendental Dialectic,* II, c. 2, sect. 9, n. 4, 4th antinomy). Such a concept of the principle of causality always postulates an antecedent phenomenon, never an absolute cause.

From the noumenal point of view, it may still be possible that there is a first cause. The idea of God is an ideal necessary for the completion of knowledge, which is irresistibly drawn to explain the conditioned by the absolutely unconditioned. The natural tendency of the human mind is to conceive God as the prototype of all things, the supreme reality, absolutely one, simple, completely determined, possessing all the perfections which constitute personality. But this metaphysical demonstration is absolutely insufficient, for want of an intelligible intuition that would serve as a basis for it; the analysis of the concepts and of the principles has made this clear in advance. However, Kant undertakes to establish that the transcendental illusion hidden in the ontological argument vitiates the proof of God's existence derived from the notion of contingency, as also that from the teleological argument. *(Transcendental Dialectic,* II, c. 3). When we come to discuss these proofs, we shall consider these special difficulties.

Likewise, for pure reason, the idea of a personal God is a *hypothesis* which invests our ideas with the greatest possible unity; it is "simply a regulative principle," which stimulates the mind in the unification of knowledge.

Practical reason alone leads us to admit the *existence* of God, not by any demonstration, but by a free act of faith, a purely

rational belief, of which "the certitude is subjectively adequate, although objectively insufficient." The existence of God and the future life are two inseparable assumptions that follow inevitably from the idea of moral obligation. The moral law says: "Do what may render you worthy of happiness" (happiness and virtue are necessarily connected by a synthetical *a priori* judgment). Now God alone can realize the harmony between virtue and happiness. Therefore, God must exist. The moral *unbeliever* is the one who does not admit what, in truth, cannot possibly be known, but what is *morally necessary* for one to suppose. This sort of incredulity always has its origin in a lack of moral interest. The greater the moral sentiment in a man, the firmer and livelier must be his faith in everything he feels himself obliged to assume, from the point of view of practical necessity. *{Logic,* Introduction, IX; *Critique of Practical Reason,* II, c. 5).

Such, then, is Kant's objection against the demonstrability of God's existence. He does not deny, as the Empirics do, the necessity of the principle of causality; but he does dispute its ontological and transcendental validity. (See solution in nos. 18, 25, 29).

Kant, as Spencer after him, confirms his thesis by an exposition of the antinomies with which, in his opinion, speculative reason clashes, whenever it proposes to go beyond the range of phenomena. The antinomy which most of all interests us here, is the fourth, which concerns the necessary being that is the cause of the world; but it becomes involved with the third, relating to freedom, if it demands that the first cause be a free cause; and also with the first relating to the eternity of the world and its extension, and with the second, which concerns the nature of cosmic matter.

It will be sufficient for us to consider the fourth antinomy, at the same time briefly commenting on the other two.

According to the thesis of this fourth Kantian antinomy, *there exists either in, or in connection with, the world, a necessary*

being, which is the absolute cause of the universe. Without such a being, we could not explain the various changes that take place in the world; for all change presupposes a complete or determined series of causes or conditions, and therefore, postulates a first cause or condition, an unconditioned existence, not contingent, but necessary.

According to the antithesis, *an absolutely necessary being does not exist, either in the world or out of it, as its cause.* Granted that there is in the world a necessary being, this being either constitutes an integral part of the cosmos, or it coincides with the sum-total of phenomena. But if a part of the cosmos were necessary and uncaused, it could have no possible reference to the conditioned phenomena that succeed each other in time. If the whole cosmic series constituted the necessary being, this would be the same as saying that a hundred thousand idiots can constitute one intelligent man. Finally, if this necessary being is outside of and apart from the world, directly it begins to act, it admits a beginning of something within itself, and therefore belongs to time and is in the world, which is contrary to the hypothesis.

This fourth antinomy is involved with the third, which concerns freedom. Its thesis states that we must admit a free causality. In matter of fact, there can be no regress to infinity in the series of causes; for in that case there would be no first cause of the phenomena about which we are certain, and hence they would be without sufficient reason for their existence. But to have a finite series of causes, we must commence with a cause which does not have to be determined by any preceding cause. In other words, we must have recourse to a free causality.

According to the antithesis, there can be no such thing as freedom. A free act would be an act without any assignable reason for its determination as such; the free cause would pass from indetermination to determination without sufficient reason. (See

solution of this antinomy in Volume II, of this work, ch. IV, nos. 59, 61-63).

The two other antinomies relating to time, space and matter, may be passed over as of less importance in the discussion of this question of the demonstrability of God's existence. We have already remarked (no. to) that the great classical proofs for the existence of God do not take into consideration the question of the eternity or non-eternity of the world. It is evidently not impossible to establish by an *a priori* argument that God created freely from all eternity, just as the sun and its rays of light are simultaneous. There would, in that case, be an infinite series of actually completed phenomena, in which there is nothing contrary to reason, regardless of what the first Kantian antinomy may say on the subject; for this series would be infinite only *a parte ante,* and completed *a parte post.* The objection that creation by God could have had no beginning in time, simply because no sufficient reason can be given why the world should begin to exist at a certain moment rather than at any other, again brings up the same difficulty as that about freedom. If freedom involves no contradiction, then creation in time is a possibility.

As for the second antinomy, which concerns divisible matter, or matter which is not infinite in extension, we shall discuss this problem in connection with the principle of substance (see no. 23).

Kant solves the antinomies of time, space, and matter by rejecting both thesis and antithesis. It cannot be said of the world, as *a thing in itself,* either that it is finite or that it is infinite in time and space; neither that it is composed of simple parts or that it is divisible *ad infinitum.* Space and time are the *a priori forms* of sensibility.

As for freedom and necessary being, they cannot exist in the phenomenal or sensible order; but Kant sees no reason why

they could not exist in the noumenal or intelligible order; and that is all that speculative reason can say about it: for it is unable to prove that God exists.

14) *The general principle of modern agnosticism.*

By way of a brief summary, we may say that Kantian Empiricism and Idealism are two phases of Agnosticism. As the Encyclical *"Pascendi"* remarks, the general principle of Agnosticism is nothing else but Phenomenalism. "Human reason strictly limited to the sphere of things phenomenal, which means to the appearances of things, and precisely such as they appear, has neither the power nor the right to go beyond these limits; hence it cannot rise up to God, not even so much as know whether He exists through the medium of created things." (Denz., 2072). Human reason can have knowledge only of phenomena and of the laws by which they are governed. Our ideas, even the very *first ones* implied in the first principles, have merely phenomenal, but no ontological, validity. From them we can form no concept of the *substantial being,* if such a being exists under the veil of these phenomena. With far more reason we may say that they have no transcendental value; for they do not permit us to know God, the transcendental Being, supposing that He really exists.[12]

The first principles include such primary notions as being, essence, existence, unity, identity, truth, goodness, efficient and final cause, and, as a consequence, intelligence essentially related to being, as also volition essentially related to goodness. The corresponding first principles are those of identity, contradiction, sufficient reason, causality, finality, to which may be added the following axioms: (1) Whatever is a subject of existence is called substance; (2) the intelligibility of anything corresponds to the degree of its participation in being. *(Nihil est intelligibile nisi in*

12 Medieval Agnosticism, such as we find it, for instance, in the writings of Maimonides, is of a less radical type.

quantum est in actu); (3) only that can be the object of volition which appeals to one as being good. *(Nihil volitum nisi praecognitum ut conveniens').*

By *ontological validity* we understand the inherent aptness of these first principles to make known to us not only the phenomena previously perceived by the senses or by consciousness, but also being itself (*ipso bv),* the senses revealing the presence of the same to us by means of these phenomena.

By *transcendent validity* we mean that these first ideas are in themselves apt to convey to us a true knowledge of God, considered as the first transcendental and non-immanent cause. The principal ideas of this type are called by the Scholastics, *transcendentals;*[13] though the term is used in a different sense, meaning that such ideas transcend not only created beings, but also the limits of the genera or the categories and may be found according to their various modes in all these genera. Thus, being and the properties of being, such as unity, truth, goodness, quality, relation, action, passion, place and time, are found in varying degrees in each of them.

This twofold validity, ontological and transcendental, of first ideas and first principles, is generally rejected by agnostics.

Empirical Agnosticism (such, for instance, as we find in the writings of Spencer, Mill or W. James) rejects it, since it reduces first ideas to mere composite ideas, to which a general name is given. It is the most radical form of Nominalism. These composite images, formed according to the laws of association of particular images, the residua of sensation, are such that the similarities between the ideas have a constructive and the differences between them a neutralizing effect. Just like sensation, they

[13] According to Kant, that inquiry "is called transcendental, which is not so much occupied with objects as with the mode of our cognition of these objects, in so far as this mode of cognition is possible *a priori." (Critique of Pure Reason,* Introd., Ch. VII).

represent merely sensible phenomena. From this point of view substance is simply a collection of phenomena, and causality a succession of phenomena that cannot be said really to have been produced.

Personality is nothing else but a sequence of interior phenomena mysteriously grouped together by our consciousness of them. Reason can have knowledge only of phenomena, because between it and the senses there is no essential difference.

In the idealistic Agnosticism of Kant and his disciples, the neocritics, the ontological and transcendental validity of first ideas finds no acceptance, since these are reduced to purely subjective forms of thought, the sole purpose of the names being to indicate the various groups of phenomena. Causality is but a subjective form, uniting the phenomena which occur successively in time.

Agnosticism, whether empirical or idealistic, as a general rule confirms its thesis by an exposition of the antinomies in which, as it claims, reason always ends whenever it seeks to transcend phenomena. Briefly, they say that, on the one hand, a necessary and unconditioned being is required to explain this world of ours; on the other hand, the unconditioned cannot be a cause, for it would come into relation with its effect. If, to safeguard its independence, we say that it was first of all self-existent and afterwards began to act, we find ourselves obliged to admit that it had a beginning, which is an open contradiction. (Fourth antinomy of Kant and Spencer.)

If we say that it can act when it so wishes, because it is free, we find ourselves confronted with the special antinomy of freedom. The free act, which, on the one hand, seems to be a requisite, is, on the other hand, without a determining cause, without a sufficient reason. (Third antinomy of Kant). We also get in conflict with the antinomy relating to time; for if the world had a beginning in time, no cogent reason could be given why it should have begun at a certain moment in time rather than at

any other. (First antinomy of Kant). Finally, freedom presupposes consciousness, and since we cannot conceive of consciousness except as a relation implying a duality consisting of subject and object, it cannot be predicated of the absolute, which must be both one and simple (Spencer, Fichte).

The fundamental conceptions of traditional theology are irreconcilable. The absolute, on the one hand, must be conceived as absolutely simple, while on the other hand we must attribute to it a multiplicity of perfections which it cannot formally possess without their destroying its simplicity. In addition to these antinomies, we have the classical difficulties as to how infinite justice can be reconciled with infinite mercy, foreknowledge with freedom, the omnipotence of an infinitely good God with the existence of evil.

Thus, these antinomies seem to confirm the general principle of Agnosticism, which, as we have seen, is nothing else but Phenomenalism, or the negation of the ontological and transcendental validity of reason.

All the objections raised against the demonstrability of God's existence can easily be traced to the Empirics or Idealists.

SECTION III

PROOF OF THE DEMONSTRABILITY OF GOü's EXISTENCE

To prove this demonstrability we shall defend: (1) the *ontological validity* of first ideas and first principles, and at the same time show the necessity of these principles; (2) their *transcendental validity.* The ontological range of first ideas is essentially presupposed by their transcendental validity. It is clear that if these ideas have but a phenomenal import, and do not enable us to detect the substantial being underlying the phenomena, they cannot be the means of our reaching God, the first transcendental cause.

Perhaps some may be surprised that so many pages of this book are taken up with the discussion of the abstractive intuition of intelligible being and of the first laws of being. The reason is that it seems to us impossible to reply to the current objections against the traditional proofs for the existence of God, without recurring to these preliminary fundamentals of general metaphysics concerning being, identity, becoming, multiple, substance, causality, and finality. If there are any ideas that are of profound and permanent significance from an apologetic point of view, may we not say that it is above all these first notions which demand our serious consideration? From their analysis we obtain an explanation and justification of the *sensus communis* or natural reason.

ARTICLE I

THE ONTOLOGICAL VALIDITY OF FIRST IDEAS AND FIRST PRINCIPLES

The agnostic denial of the ontological validity of first ideas and their correlative first principles is nothing else but the negation of the *abstractive intuition of the intelligible,* commonly called by St. Thomas and the Scholastics "the simple apprehension of the intelligible in the sensible," or *"indivisibilium intelligentia."* [1]

Empirical Nominalism reduces the concept to a composite image with a common name. According to Kant, the concept is merely an *a priori* form of thought, its sole purpose being to unite phenomena. According to these theories, all intuition of the intelligible, no matter how imperfect, is thus suppressed.

We certainly have no intuition of intelligible being considered in its pure state, as if we were pure spirits. This was the error of Plato, Spinoza, and the Ontologists. But we have a certain intui-

[1] See St. Thomas, *De Anima,* Bk. III, Leet. 2; *Met.,* Bk. IV, Leet. 6; *De Veritate,* q. 14, a. 1.

tion of intelligible being, derived by the process of abstraction from being as made known to us by the senses.[2]

"Circa naturas rerum sensibilium primo figitur intuitus nostri intellectus, qui ratio proprie dicitur. Ex hoc autem ulterius assurgit ad cognoscendum spiritum creatum (it is to the natures of things as presented by the senses that our intellect first of all is directed, and this act is rightly called reason. From that, however, it proceeds farther, to acquire a knowledge of the purely immaterial in creation)." (St. Thomas, *De Veritate,* q. 15, a. 1, ad yum). Just because man is not an angel, we must not, like the Empirics, practically identify him with the beast, nor must we claim, as Kant does, that his intellectual life is perhaps but a well-connected dream.

It is this imperfect intuition of the intelligible, united with abstraction, which we must briefly explain before we defend its ontological validity.

15) *The intellectual apprehension of intelligible being and the intuition of its first principles.*

What is meant by this imperfect intuition, united with abstraction, is sufficiently explained by St. Thomas in the First Part of his *Summa Theologica,* question 85, article 1. The cognizable object, he says, is proportional to the cognitive faculty. If this faculty is, like that of any of the senses, dependent upon some corporeal organ, it can have knowledge only of that which is material and sensible, precisely in so far as it is material and sensible. In the case of pure spirits, since the cognitive faculty is intrinsically and extrinsically independent of any corporeal organ, its proper object is immaterial being, not sensible, but purely intelligible; and if it has any knowledge of material things, this can

2 See Aristotle, *De Anima,* Bk. III, Ch. VII; Leet. 12 of St. Thomas: "To function intellectually the soul has need of the phantasms—the intellect understands the natures of things in the phantasms." See also *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 12, a. 4; q. 84, a. 7; q. 85, a. 1 and 5.

be only because it views them from a higher plane, in that it has a direct intuition of them in the purely intelligible. Finally, if the cognitive faculty is, like the human intellect, intrinsically independent of any bodily organ, but nevertheless united with the sensitive faculties, its proper object is intelligible being as existing in sensible and individual matter, but not precisely as existing in such matter. Now, to know what happens to exist in sensible and individual matter, but not just as existing in such matter, is to abstract the immaterial from the sensible.[3]

So then, whereas the pure spirit views material things from a higher plane, in that it knows them through the immaterial: the human intellect reaches the immaterial from a lower level, through the immateriality hidden under the veil of things material. (For a fuller development of this subject see St. Thomas, la, q. 85, a. 1.).

Whatever the Agnostics may say about it, this consideration or imperfect perception of our intellect differs essentially from sensible intuition, in that it penetrates beyond the sensible phenomena. "The word *intelligence,"* says St. Thomas (IIa Ilae, q. 8, a. 1) "signifies a certain intimate knowledge, for it is derived from *intus legere,* which means, to read what is within (to read in anything its sufficient reason for existing). And this is evident when we observe the difference between the intellect and the senses. In matter of fact, sensible knowledge is concerned only with external and sensible qualities. Intellectual knowledge, on

[8] "But to know what is in individual matter, not as it exists in such matter, is to abstract the form from individual matter, which is represented by the phantasms." (la, q. 85, a. 1). "The things which belong to the species of any material tiling, such as a stone, or a man, or a horse, can be thought of apart from the individualizing principles which do not belong to the notion of the species. This is what we mean by abstracting the universal from the particular or the intelligible species from the phantasms. *(Ibid.,* ad Im.) Not only docs the active intellect throw light on the phantasms; it docs more; by its own power it abstracts the intelligible species from the phantasm. - - - By the power of the active intellect we are able to disregard the conditions of individuality, and to consider the specific nature, the image of which informs the passive intellect." *(Ibid.,* ad 4m.)

the contrary, penetrates to the very essence of a thing. The proper object of the human intellect is that essence or quiddity of sensible things, and of this it has at least a confused knowledge. [The animal sees the color of the plant, but we know what that plant is—matter endowed with vegetative life; and we know enough of the lower forms of life to realize that the smallest blade of grass, because it has life, is worth more than all the gold found in the earth. See Aristotle, *De Anima,* Bk. Ill, c. VI; St. Thomas, Leet. 11]. The specific nature of a thing is hidden under its accidents, just as the meaning of anything is contained in the written or uttered words, just as by means of symbols truth is expressed. . . . And the stronger is the light df reason, the better it can penetrate to the innermost nature of things."

Without a doubt, the natural light of our mind, while united with the body, is feeble when compared with the angelic, and above all with the divine intellect; still it is an intellectual light, and if it does not give us an immediate and distinct intuition of the essences of things, it at least acquires, in a general and confused manner, from the sensible phenomena, a knowledge of *intelligible* being,[4] and its most general laws, known as first principles.

This first knowledge is truly an apprehension, a mental perception, an imperfect intuition, associated with abstraction.[5] The

4 See St. Thomas, la, q. 85, a. 3; *De Veritate,* q. 1, a. 1, and the Prologue to *De Ente et Essentia.* Also Cajetan in his commentary on the prologue to *De Ente et Essentia.* John of St. Thomas, in his *Cursus Phil. Phys.,* q. 1, a. 3, particularly in the Dico 20, remarks as follows: *"Prima ratio cognoscibilis a nostro intellectu naturaliter procedente est* quidditas rei materialis *sub aliquo* praedicato maxime confuso, *quod praedicatum est* ens, *ut concretum et imbibitum in aliqua re determinata, quae tunc occurrit cognitioni. Fere est idem ac cognoscere rem quoad an est.* (What our intellect first of all acquires a knowledge of, is the *essence of sensible things, but in a very confused manner,* expressing it by the very general term of *being.* Thus it is that we arrive at the notion of being, for the first concrete object presents itself as such for our cognition. It is about the same as saying that we know *something* actually exists)." Then follows immediately a judgment about this particular thing. See St. Thomas, la, q. 85, a. 3; q. 86, a. 1.

6 Cajetan, in his commentary on the *De Ente et Essentia of St.* Thomas (cd. de

intellect considers, in sensible things, intelligible being and its most general aspects, without actually considering the sensible qualities; just as with words it is not the arrangement of the letters that arrests the attention, but the meaning of the words. This simple apprehension of intelligible being and the intuition of its first principles enables the mind to acquire a more complex knowledge by subsequent reasoning, and it judges of the validity of the same by referring again to those principles by means of which it obtained such knowledge. (See IIa IIae, q. 8, a. i, ad i and 2; la, q. 79, a. 8 and 9; and *De Veritate,* q. 1, a. 12; q. 15, a. 1, Whether intellect and reason are different faculties). Hence, all reasoning starts first from intuition and ends again in this intellectual intuition by a reduction of all things to first principles. (See la, q. 79, a. 8). Therefore, our reason deserves to be called intelligence.[8]

Maria, q. I, p. 20), writes as follows: *"Ad conceptum confusum speciei specialissimae requiritur et sufficit* duplex abstractio: *altera per actum* intellectus agentis *(illuminantis), scilicet separatio a singularibus; altera per actum intellectus possibilis, scilicet* actualiter intueri speciem, *et non actualiter intueri genus. Ita ad conceptum confusum actualem entis duplex est abstractio necessaria.* For acquiring a vague concept of the *species infima (specialissimae,* as the Scholastics call it), what is required and is sufficient, is a twofold abstraction: the one is a process of the *intellectus agens* (the illuminative faculty), by which the species is separated from its individualizing traits; the other process pertains to the *intellectus possibilis,* in that it *actually intues* the species, but not the genus. Therefore, to acquire a vague concept of being, two kinds of abstraction are needed." What is here called *intuition and abstraction,* is nothing else but the abstractive process of the *intellectus possibilis.* St. Thomas and the Scholastics generally refer to it as simple apprehension *(simplex apprehensio),* and the expression, "the intuition of the first principles of being" is of frequent occurrence in their writings. It must be noted here that *intuition* is contrasted, not with abstraction, but with *deduction.*

6 St. Thomas is very clear on this point. In *De Veritate,* q. 15, a. I, he says: "Ratio *comparatur ad* intellectum *ut ad principium et ut ad terminum; ut ad principium quidem, quia non posset mens humana ex uno in aliud discurrere, nisi ejus discursus ab aliqua simplici acceptione veritatis inciperet, quae quidem acceptio est intellectus principiorum. Similiter nec rationis discursus ad aliquid certum perveniret, nisi fieret examinatio ejus quod per discursum invenitur, ad principia prima, in quae ratio resolvit. Ut sic intellectus invenitur rationis principium quantum ad viam inveniendi, terminus vero ad viam judicandi. Unde quamvis cognitio humanae animae propriae sit* per viam rationis, *est tamen in ea* aliqua participatio

If our intellect were more powerful, there would be no need of this investigation, which by a series of judgments and conclusions proceeds from first to more complex ideas, from a confused knowledge of essences to a more distinct knowledge of them (definition), and then, by means of this knowledge, deduces the various properties of a being. By a simple act of intuition the intellect would then have all at once a perfect knowledge of things; it would have a direct and distinct perception of their essences, and in them their properties. It would instantaneously comprehend the full import of the principles and would immediately perceive in them the truth of the conclusions. It is in this manner that the Divine Intellect knows all possible truths by a simple intuition of the Divine Essence. And the angels are so far superior to us that they know a greater number of things by means of fewer ideas, immediately perceiving them in all their aspects. The angels may be viewed as spheres of intellectual light, those of the higher orders becoming brighter, the nearer they are to God; and those of the lower orders gradually flickering and finally dying out in the obscurity of material things. (See Ia, q. 85, a. 5; q. 58, a. 3 and 4).

Our power of intuition is feeble, and that is why it is so divided (morcelated). Nevertheless, it is truly an intellectual intuition, an

illius simplicis cognitionis quae in substantiis superioribus invenitur, ex quo vim intellectivam habere dicuntur. In referring the reason to intellect we may consider the latter in one sense as the principle, and in another sense as the terminus of the operations of reason; as the principle indeed, because the human mind could not argue from one thing to another unless it started the argument by the simple acceptance of some truth, and this, of course, is the acknowledgment by the intellect of certain first principles. In like manner, by no process of reasoning could one know anything for certain, unless what the reason has thus acquired be again examined in the light of those first principles to which reason submits its findings. Thus, the intellect assumes the role of principle in the acquisition of truth and becomes the terminus when it passes judgment on the same. Therefore, although human knowledge commences with the reasoning faculty, nevertheless there is inherent in this same faculty *some of that simple knowledge possessed by beings of a higher order, and on this account they are said to have intellectual power."* (See also Ia, q. 79, a. 8).

intellection infinitely superior to sensation. It is feeble and cannot immediately, by its own power, reach the source of all that is intelligible, namely, the Divine Essence. It cannot perceive things in the brightness of their pure intelligibility, but only in the obscurity of the senses. The reason for this is that our intellect is united with a body, and in point of mental vision is, as Aristotle remarks (II *Met.,* c. i), like the owl, whose power of vision is so feeble that it is blinded by the light of the sun and can see only at night. (S. *theol.,* la, q. 76, a. 5).

Because our power of intellectual intuition is feeble, and cannot grasp the intelligible essences of things except in the obscurity of sensible qualities, thus slowly deducing their properties, it is of necessity divided (morcelated). It may be compared with tire eyes of certain insects, in which the image of things seen resembles a sort of mosaic, which sufficiently preserves the general outline of the objects, though no longer clearly distinguished from each other.

Nevertheless, as soon as we are able to reason, it is only in the obscurity of things perceived by the senses that we detect intelligible being and its fundamental principles. "That being is what our intellect first of all sees in anything," is a frequently recurring statement of St. Thomas. "This is what is more known for it, and by which it knows everything else; and every idea presupposes the idea of being, just as every demonstration is based upon the first principles of being." 7

7 St. Thomas, in *De Veritate,* q. i, a. i, writes as follows: "*Sicut in demonstrationibus oportet fieri reductionem in aliqua principia per se intellectui nota, ita investigando quid est unumquodque. /Ilias utrobique in infinitum irefur; et sic periret omnino scientia et cognitio rerum. Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum, et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit, est ens.* Just as in demonstrations there must be a reduction to certain first principles directly known by the intellect, so also it must be when inquiring into the nature of anything. Otherwise, in both cases there would be no end to the process; and this would mean that all scientific knowledge and the cognition of things were completely hopeless. That which presents itself first of all to the intellect as the best known,

St. Thomas often mentions also the other first concepts which, together with that of being, are included in the first principles; for instance, unity, truth, goodness, etc.[8]

16) *How shall we defend the ontological validity of our intellect and of its first ideas?*

This ontological validity cannot be demonstrated by any direct method, for, like the necessity of first principles, it is an immediately evident truth. The immediately connected subject and predicate do not admit of a demonstrative middle term. All that we can do is to explain the meaning of the subject and the predicate, what is meant by intellect or the idea of being on the one hand, and, on the other, what is ontological validity. This explanation will immediately enable us to see that intelligence essentially implies a relation to being. This explanation may be presented in the form of a syllogism; it is not, however, strictly speaking, a direct demonstration, but can at most be called a *direct defence.* First evidences can be defended, but, not directly demonstrated; for an attempt at demonstration would result merely in a vicious circle, since one would have to assume as true what remains to be proved, to wit, the ontological validity of first principles.

Even the Agnostics, in spite of their system, as soon as they cease to philosophize, or even whilst they philosophize, are naturally forced to admit—as their language proves—that the direct purpose of the intellect is to acquire knowledge, that the idea of being is the idea of something real, that the principle of contradiction is a law of real objects, and not merely of thought, and

is the concept of being, and it is into this concept of being that it resolves all other concepts."

8 On this point he writes: "There are certain universally known concepts which are the natural endowments of the human intellect, such as those of being, unity, goodness, and others of this kind; by means of these concepts the way in which the intellect comes to know the quiddity of anything is the same as that by which it arrives at conclusions deduced from first principles." (St. Thomas, *Quodlibet.,* VIII, a. 4).

that the absurd is as incapable of realization as it is inconceivable. Not one of these propositions can be demonstrated directly; it is sufficient that the meaning of the terms be understood.

But if the ontological validity of our intellect, and of its first ideas and its first principles, cannot be directly demonstrated, it admits of a sort of indirect proof, by the logical process of *reductio ad absurdum,* by a recourse to the principle of contradiction in so far as this principle is at least the necessary law of human thought.

We shall set forth, first of all, this indirect defence, which will enable us to realize more fully the force of the direct defence. Although the latter is but an explanation of terms, it contains virtually the solution of the problem of universals, by establishing the truth of Moderate Realism against Nominalism (or Empiricism), and against Subjectivistic Conceptualism (or Idealism in the Kantian sense), at the same time avoiding such exaggerated Realism as that of Plato, Spinoza, or the Ontologists.

17) *Indirect defence of the ontological validity of first ideas.*

We shall show: (A) that the denial of this validity leads the Empirical Agnostics or Idealists into insoluble difficulties; (B) that it leads them to absurdity.

A. *Insoluble diffictdties*

The primary principles of reasoning are necessary and universal, and, moreover, cannot be the subject of doubt. How to explain this fact is an impossibility for Empiricism. We are conscious that we consider them as universal and necessary (we are quite certain that in absolutely all cases what is real cannot be non-real; that every beginning has a cause); besides, science demands this necessity and this universality. Now, experience, which is always particular and contingent, cannot account for

these two characteristics. Concerning the principle of causality, we all—except the Positivists when they begin to philosophize—think that what happens must necessarily have a cause, and that the cause is not only followed by its effect, but produces the effect. Though we have actual experience of any effect only as the result of some voluntary effort on our part, we affirm this fact of all external causes, of the hammer striking the stone, and of the movement imparted by one billiard ball to another. Evidently, this universal and necessary principle does not arise from the recurring experience of phenomena that succeed one another. Moreover, there are just as many phenomena the causes of which the majority of men seek for in vain, as those, the causes of which they think they know. The child wants to know the reason for many things which cannot be explained to him. Yet, like a grown-up person, he is convinced that there *is* a reason for the phenomena which he cannot understand. Reason, therefore, is forced to accept the principle of causality as universally true, although experience does not establish the fact of universal causality. It is of no avail to invoke the principle of heredity, for our ancestors had no clearer conception of causes than we have. It is, therefore, contrary to reason for the Empiric to hold that there is no contradiction in the assertion of the possibility of things happening without a cause in some world unknown to us.

To deny the necessity and the absolute universality of principles means the reduction of the syllogism to a mere tautology and the complete destruction of the basis of induction. As a matter of fact, the major of a syllogism is but a generalization of particular cases and ought to include *actually,* and not merely virtually, the particular case which it is the purpose of the conclusion to establish. It presupposes that the case has been verified by experience. If causality were such as is stated above, then we could not find any universal principle by means of which we could formulate a truly general law from particular facts of experience. The prin-

ciple that "in the order of nature the same cause in the same circumstances always produces the same effect," would have but the force of a strong presumption, based upon experience of past events.

The Kantian theory explains the universality and necessity of the principles, but denies their objectivity, naturally affirmed by the intellect with no less certainty than the two preceding characteristics. Philosophical reflection must give the explanation that is in agreement with nature and not in contradiction to it, and if one succeeded in showing that it is a "natural illusion," that our own intellect deceives us, he would at least have to explain why it is an illusion. On the other hand, by admitting the abstractive intuition of the intelligible, as Aristotle and the Scholastics understood it, the objectivity of the principles is explained, as well as their necessity and universality. The denial of this intuition led Kant to admit *synthetic judgments a priori, i. e.* blind judgments for which there is no foundation, intellectual acts for which there is no *sufficient reason.* This is tantamount to saying that the irrational is imbedded in the rational, and that ignorance is of the very warp and woof of knowledge. The mind cannot by the verb "to be" affirm real identity between subject and predicate (that a thing *is* such), except when it has evident certainty of this real identity, derived either from the analysis of the ideas (a *priori),* or else from a critical inspection of existing things *(a posteriori).* But if both of these evidences are wanting, then the affirmation is irrational, without reason. How can the intellect blindly assign to the phenomena an intelligibility that they in no way possess? In fact, as we shall see later on, the principle of causality and the other principles derived from the principle of sufficient reason, are analytical in this sense that the analysis of the ideas which they imply, shows there exists under the logical diversity of subject and predicate, a real identity, which cannot be denied without contradiction. As for the principles of Newto-

nian physics, everyone now-a-days admits that they are *synthetic a posteriori.* Another difficulty that arises from the preceding is, that the *application of the Kantian categories* to phenomena is *arbitrary.* Why is it that certain phenomena are classed under the category of substance and others under that of causality? Why is it that all cases of phenomena which succeed one another, such as that of night and day, may not be explained by the principle of causality? If, in order to avoid saying that it is arbitrary, we admit that we recognize the relationship existing in the objects themselves between substance, causality, etc., is not this the same as admitting the intuition of the intelligible? In that case, of what use is the category?[9] Finally, as Fichte remarked (and the Empirics repeated, though from an opposite point of view), *there is no proof that the phenomena, if they* are *external to us, can always be assigned without the least violence to the various categories.* What guarantee have we that the world of sensation will always be susceptible of becoming the object of thought, and that some day it may not exhibit the present spectacle of disorder, chance, and chaos? [10]

From this latter difficulty the only way of escape for the Subjectivist is to maintain with Fichte that these phenomena proceed from the ego, and that just as God's knowledge is the measure of all things, so also is ours; but in that case the human mind could not be ignorant about anything, a theory which is most certainly contradicted by the facts of experience.

Thus the denial of the direct perception of the intelligible led Kant into insoluble difficulties; for he not only refused to concede to the metaphysical principles any force beyond mere phenomena, but even in the phenomenal order he admitted that their value is merely subjective, consisting in an arbitrary and precarious application of the principles. "In a word, the Kantian theory

9 See Rabier, *Psychologie,* 2nd ed., p. 282.
10 Rabier, *op. cit.,* p. 387.

has in no way succeeded in giving to the principles that absolute and scientific certitude which it promised." (Rabier, *ibid).*

B) *Indirect defence by the method of reductio ad absurdum*

The denial of the ontological validity of the intellect and of its primary notions results, moreover, in rendering absurd the essential elements of intellectual cognition, such as (a) the object, (b) the idea, (c) the principles, (d) the act of understanding, (e) the faculty of knowing.

a) *The object.* There is no longer a known object; what we know is merely an idea. Hence it follows that we cannot distinguish the object from the act of direct understanding (e. *g.,* causality), from the object of reflex understanding (e. *g.,* the idea of cause), since *de facto* the object of direct understanding is identical with the idea.

Now it is evident that the knowledge of causality and the knowledge of the idea of cause are two altogether distinct things; for the reflex act necessarily presupposes the direct act and cannot be identified with it except by a formal contradiction. (See St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* la, q. 85, a. 2). In other words, the intellect cannot reflect on itself as long as it has no knowledge of any definite object. Before it can reflect upon itself and its own ideas, it must have had something definite to think of; there is no such thing as thinking of nothing.

b) *The idea.* To maintain that in the process of direct intellection the idea is the object known, and not the means by which the intellect acquires knowledge of something else, means that we must admit that there is nothing real corresponding to what is represented by the idea, which is, therefore, an idea of nothing; in other words, the idea is an idea and no idea at the same time and in the same sense. To put it differently—to maintain that the

idea, being an intellectual impression or expression of the human intellect,[11] corresponds to nothing real, is the same as saying that, at the same time and in the same sense, it is something relative and non-relative, which means the destruction of the very concept of both the idea and the mental expression. Fichte himself is forced to admit that this duality of representation and represented object is necessary for acquiring knowledge, and he goes so far as to conclude from this that if God is absolutely simple, there can be no knowledge in Him.

To be sure, an idea does not necessarily refer to an actually existing thing, but it must at least refer to something that is possible.[12] It cannot refer to pure nothingness; for that would involve a contradiction, *e. g.,* a square circle; and in that case we should no longer have an idea, but conflicting images. Now it is evident that there can be nothing contradictory in primary ideas, because of their simplicity. (See la, q. 85, a. 6).

c) *The principles.* The Agnostic who doubts the ontological validity of primary ideas, must also doubt that of correlative principles, especially the validity of the principle of contradiction, which is founded on the notion of being. The Agnostic, though admitting that the absurd is *inconceivable,* must doubt whether it is *actually impossible.* He concedes that a square circle is inconceivable, but from his point of view a square circle is not evidently impossible of *realization.* It might be possible for some canny genius to produce something which at the same time and in the same sense exists and does not exist. Now, this doubt is

11 The idea expressed interiorly, or the internal word *(verbum menus'),* is essentially "intentional," or relative to that which is expressed. It is not an expression of itself, or of nothing. The idea of a logical entity *(e.g.,* the predicate of a sentence) is in reality merely the mental form of our thought, but this mental form is the result of a reflection made by the mind on direct ideas that express cither possible or actually existing things.

12 It is only through the medium of the senses or of consciousness that the human intellect in its present state acquires a knowledge of actually existing being.

absurd; for a being supposed to exist and not to exist at the same time, would both correspond and not correspond to our idea of being, and as this idea is simple, there can be no question of a partial correspondence. The supposition, even subjectively considered, is inconceivable.[13]

d) *The act of thinking*. The Agnostic from his point of view cannot be aware of the reality of the act of thinking; all that he can know is the representation of this act. And even if he were directly conscious of its reality, he is not absolutely certain of this fact, for if he doubts the objectivity of the principle of contradiction as a law of *being,* if the real is in itself susceptible of contradiction, there is nothing to assure him that the action which he regards as real is actually real. If being is not the primary and formal object of the intellect, the intellect will never acquire any knowledge of being; admitting the hypothesis, the Phenomenalists are manifestly in the right. It was thus that the seventeenth-century Thomist Goudin *(Philosophia,* ed. i860, t. IV, p. 254) refuted the claim that *"cogito, ergo sum"* is the first of all principles, more certain than the objective principle of contradiction. Aristotle had shown in his defence of this principle *(Meta.,* Bk. IV) that anyone who in the cognitive order refuses to start from the idea of *being* (as the primary and formal object of the intellect), and from the first principle implied by it, denies himself the right to affirm anything, either about being, or about the existence of his own thought, or even his own ego. "In what way, then, does this or that man differ from the plant, which is entirely devoid of knowledge? He must imitate Cratylus, who, incapable of the least assertion, contented himself with moving his finger." *(Met.,* Bk. IV, chs. iv and v).

e) *The intellect.* To doubt the ontological validity of primary ideas and first principles, ends in making the intellect itself ab-

13 See St. Thomas in his Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, Bk. 4, where he defends the principle of contradiction.

solutely unintelligible and absurd. It simply means to doubt that the intellect and intelligible being are essentially related to each other. Now this relationship is included in the notion we have of intellect, and its denial means the denial of the intellect itself; for in that case there would be no intelligible object corresponding to the intellect, which is absurd.

The Agnostic of the sensist type classes the operations of the intellect in their final analysis amongst those which belong to the senses, the sensible memory and the imagination.

According to the Agnostic of the idealistic type, there are two ways of viewing the human intellect, and both of them are meaningless. (a) With Kant, the Agnostic may deny to the intellect all passivity with regard to intelligible being, and admit merely the passivity of the senses with regard to phenomena; hence, for the rational and evident principles by which the intellect can establish contact with being, the Agnostic must substitute synthetic *a priori* principles, which are blind, unmotivated, and irrational syntheses. Thus, the irrational becomes the essential structure of reason, and the intellect, deprived of its relation to intelligible being, which is its formal object, is rendered meaningless. (/?) On the other hand, he may, with Fichte, deny absolutely the passivity of the human intellect with regard to phenomena as well as to intelligible being. In that case he must identify the human with the divine intellect, whose knowledge is the cause of things, and it would follow that the human mind, the source of all intelligibility, must be omniscient *ab aeterno,* and no ignorance of any kind is possible. (See la, q. 79, a. 2).

The above-mentioned remarks outline the indirect defence of the ontological validity of primary ideas considered in their general aspect. The Agnostics, in denying this validity, are confronted with the insoluble difficulty of making an absurdity of all the essential elements of intellectual knowledge. In order to prove the natural range of the intellect with regard to being, the Ag-

nostic deprives the intellect of its essential relationship to being. It is as if one were to break a spring in order to test its elasticity.

18) *Direct defence of the ontological validity of primary ideas.*

As we have previously remarked, there is no question here of a direct demonstration. What immediately appeals to one as immediately self-evident cannot be directly demonstrated. All that one can do is to explain the terms, so that their immediate connection may be more clearly perceived, and then to solve the objections.

First of all, we shall make a few general remarks upon primary ideas and their correlative principles. Following the logical order, we shall consider: (a) the ontological validity of the intellect, (b) the validity of primary ideas in general; which we shall confirm (c) by showing that *being* constitutes the very basis of judgment and reasoning. Then we shall answer the objections.

a) *The intellect.* The intellect is a cognitive faculty superior to the senses. Has it ontological validity? In other words, can it acquire knowledge not only of the phenomena perceived by the senses and the consciousness, but also of *being* itself (to 8v), of which the phenomena are but the sensible manifestation? A proper understanding of what is meant by the word "intellect" will answer this question.

Every faculty, says St. Thomas, must have its formal object, to which it is naturally ordained, to which it attains first of all, and by means of which it comes to know everything else. Thus, the formal object of the sense of sight is that *sensible quality* known as color, for nothing is visible except by means of color; sound is tire formal object of the sense of hearing; consciousness has for its object the internal impression made upon us by something external, and *good* is the formal object of the will, so much so that we cannot desire evil except in so far as it appears good. The intellect, too, cannot be conceived except in relation to a formal

object, and if the intellect is a faculty distinct from the senses or the consciousness, its formal object must also be different. That its formal object is the result of a greater penetration [14] than that of any of the senses is clear from the very meaning of the word *intellect* (from *intus legere),* which implies a reading of what is within. Now for the intellect and the object to be in due proportion to each other, the latter must be formally intelligible, since formal sensibility will not suffice. What the intellect immediately perceives as its formal object, without any process of reasoning, is *intelligible being,* of which the phenomena are but the external manifestation. We cannot conceive of intellect apart from a relation to intelligible being, no more than we can conceive of sensation without a relation to sensible phenomena, or of sight without relation to color. And just as nothing is visible except by color, so nothing is intelligible in any of the three operations of the mind (conception, judgment, and reasoning), except in so far as it has a relation to being.

Thus the study of the three operations of the mind shows us *a posteriori* what we have already seen *a priori,* namely, that the intellect is not in itself intelligible except as a living relation to *being,* which is the center of all its ideas, the "soul" of all its judgments and all its conclusions. Thus the intellect appears more and more as the "faculty of being," whereas the external and internal senses stop short at phenomena which constitute the fringe of reality. On this point St. Thomas remarks: "Just as the sense of sight naturally perceives color, and the sense of hearing sound, so the intellect naturally perceives *being and all that which directly pertains to being, considered as such,* and on this cognition is founded the perception of *first principles, e.g.,* that there can be no affirmation and denial of the same thing at the same time and in

14 St. Thomas in the IIa IIae, q. 8, a. I, writes: *"Dicitur intelligere, quasi intus legere."* Sensitive cognition is concerned about sensible external qualities. Intellectual cognition penetrates to the essence of a thing.

the same sense, etc. Only these principles, therefore, does the intellect know naturally, and by their means, it perceives the conclusions, just as sight, by means of color, perceives not only all those sensible objects susceptible of perception by more than one of the sensitive faculties, but also what may be inferred from such perception." (See *C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. 83, §32).

b) *Primary ideas.* The first operation of the mind, which is called conception or simple apprehension, directly perceives the truths expressed by primary ideas. A vindication of the ontological validity of these ideas implies that by means of them we can come to know not only sensible phenomena, but also the *being* which they contain, just as written or oral words contain an intelligible meaning. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that there is something which essentially differentiates these intellectual ideas from imaginative and sensitive representations, which latter are but the direct expression of phenomena.

Our argument may be summed up in the following syllogism, which is not demonstrative, but merely explanatory:

Ideas which express not sensible qualities, but something which is in itselj intelligible and accidentally sensible (sensibile per accidens et intelligibile per se), *have not only phenomenal, but likewise ontological validity.*

Now, the primary ideas of being—essence, unity, truth, goodness, substance, causality, finality—do not express sensible qualities, but something which is in itself intelligible and accidentally sensible.

Therefore, these primary ideas possess a validity which is not only phenomenal, but likewise ontological.

The major of this explanatory syllogism is evident from its very terms. By *ontological validity* is meant the aptitude to manifest the *being* which lies beyond or beneath the sensible or phenomenal qualities. This validity must, therefore, belong to those ideas which express, not sensible qualities *{sensibile per se),* such

as color, sound, heat, etc., but something more profound, which in itself or directly can be perceived only by the intellect, and not by the senses *(intelligibile per se).* This intelligible object is sensible only *per accidens.*[15]

It is because of the phenomena associated with the intelligible object, and which declare its presence to the intellect at the very moment when sensation is experienced, and this without any process of reasoning, that we say that the intelligible object is only accidentally sensible *{sensibile per accidens).*

The minor of our syllogism presents no difficulty. The primary ideas of *being*—essence, existence, unity, truth, goodness, substance, efficient causality, finality, etc., do not express phenomena or sensible qualities, but something which is *per se* or directly intelligible and accidentally sensible.

This is immediately evident from the notion of *being,* which does not appeal directly to the senses, as color or sound does, but is something profounder and more universal. No simple sensible image, not even a composite one, to which a name is assigned, is an expression of *being,* even though the Empiric Nominalists say that it is. This image can never be anything else but a representation of phenomena in juxtaposition, and not of their intimate *raison d'etre.* This intimate *raison d'être* is not something which has extension, color, heat, or cold; it implies nothing ma-

15 St. Thomas *(De Anima,* Bk. II, Leet. 13) writes: "It must be known, therefore, that for anything to be sensible *per accidens* (accidentally), the first requisite is, that the quality must be perceived by the sentient being; if what is accidentally sensible should not be perceived as such, it could not be said to be perceived as something accidental. It must therefore be known directly *(per se)* by some other cognitive faculty of the sentient being. . . . What, therefore, does not belong to any of the senses as its appropriate object of cognition, if it be something universal, pertains to intellectual apprehension. Yet, not everything which is possible of intellectual apprehension in a sensible object can be said to be accidentally sensible *(sensibile per accidens),* but only that which is immediately perceived by the intellect when confronted with the sensible object. We have an example of this in the fact that the moment anyone is seen speaking or moving, by the intellect one perceives that there is life in such actions and hence one can say that one sees that someone is living."

terial, but itself imparts intelligibility to the various sensible elements, and is the luminous centre of every idea. Thus, the composite image with a common name, which the parrot has of a clock, differs essentially from the idea of this clock, for it is the idea alone which expresses the rationale of the movement of the clock, and tells us *what the clocks is,* instead of merely manifesting its sensible phenomena in juxtaposition.

Being does not *per se* appeal to the senses, but to the intellect, and is the source of intelligibility. In addition it is accidentally sensible, because it is immediately apprehended by the intellect whenever a sensible object is presented to this faculty. It is at once perceived by it, as color is perceived by the sense of sight, and sound by that of hearing.

If the subjectivistic Conceptualists after the manner of Kant object that *being,* though it directly belongs to the intelligible and not to the sensible order, is perhaps but a subjective form of the mind, we answer by showing the opposition between the idea of being and those other ideas which express only imaginary beings that can exist nowhere but in the mind, *i. e.,* are capable of conception, but not of realization, as, for example, the logical notions of universality, species, predicate, etc. Or again, to present this same truth in a clearer light, we have only to contrast the ontological formula with the logical principle of contradiction. The ontological formula states that "a being, viewed under the same aspect, cannot at the same time exist and not exist." The logical formulation of the same principle is "that we cannot affirm and deny the same predicate of the same subject under the same aspect." This latter formula merely declares the *inconceivability* of the absurd, whereas the former states that the absurd is *objectively impossible.* To seek to reduce the idea of being to a subjective form of the mind, and the principle of contradiction to a purely logical law having no ontological value, is tantamount to identifying two manifestly distinct ideas: the impossible (or un-

realizable) and the inconceivable; or at least, it means that we do not dare to affirm the latter and doubt the extra-mental impossibility of the absurd. He who would doubt the ontological validity of the idea of being and of the principle of contradiction would have to maintain that a square circle is inconceivable, but not, perhaps, unrealizable outside of the mind. We have seen in the indirect defence that this doubt is absurd, even subjectively, and impossible.

The ontological or ultra-phenomenal validity of the ideas of unity, truth, goodness, substance, efficient causality, and finality, can be direcdy defended by referring them back to *being* as different modes thereof. We will discuss this point but briefly here, but later on shall demonstrate in particular the necessity and ontological validity of each of the principles founded on these ideas.

It is clear that unity, truth, and goodness are directly connected with *being* as properties thereof. Unity is undivided being (la, q. ii, a. 1). Truth is the conformity of being with the intellect upon which it depends, or the conformity of the intellect with being of which it is the measure (la, q. 16, a. 1-3). Goodness is desirable being (la, q. 5, a. 1-2). These ideas, therefore, do not express sensible phenomena, but something more profound, which is intelligible in itself, and do not, like being, imply anything material in their formal signification.

It is the same with the idea of *substance,* which is but a determination of the idea of *being.* Substance is *being* capable of existing in itself and not in something else. The intellect, which at once perceives *being* underneath the phenomena (something which is), observes that these phenomena are many and variable, while *being,* on the contrary, is one and the same, and that it exists in itself, and not as an attribute in another. *Being* considered as such is called substance.

Efficient causality is nothing else but the realization or actualization of something which did not previously exist. It is

clear that this realization, defined in terms of its immediate relation to potential and actual being, is perceived by the intellect, the faculty of being, under the appearances of color, heat, etc., which are perceived by the senses.

Finality is nothing else but the *raison d'être,* the why and wherefore of the means. The intellect immediately apprehends the purpose of the eye, made for seeing, and that of the ear, made for hearing; but the senses cannot perceive this why and wherefore.

Thus the ontological validity of these primary ideas is explained and can be directly demonstrated by the fact that they denote the very opposite of what is implied by the sensible elements or phenomena.

Thus, too, we see that the true solution of the problem of universals is to be found only in moderate Realism. Empirical Nominalism abolishes the intellect and intelligibility. Subjectivistic Conceptualism reduces our intellectual life to a coherent dream. Moderate Realism, on the other hand, as formulated by Aristotle, St. Thomas, and the traditional philosophy of the Schools, safeguards our intellectual life and its real validity, without admitting the exaggerated Realism of Plato, Spinoza, and the Ontologists, who claim to possess, without abstraction, an intuitive knowledge of purely intelligible realities, and who, in various degrees, confuse universal being in sensible things with the divine being. We shall return to this subject when we discuss the principle of substance, and in refuting Pantheism, which is the logical outcome of this exaggerated Realism.[16]

[10] Various reasons make it clear that *absolute realism* involves an intrinsic contradiction. Since those who adopt this theory consider the concept of being to be univocal, they cannot explain the appearance of various modes of being, and, with Parmenides, must deny all multiplicity. They are prompted, as Spinoza was, to make of finite substances and their faculties simple verbal entities. This theory ends in Nominalism, which it originally repudiated, and paves the way for Phenomenalism, which declares that there is but one substance, and in it a succession of phenomena or modes.

From our previous remarks about the idea of being and the other primary ideas, we see, in contrast with Nominalism, that there is a fundamental difference between the image and the idea. The idea, in matter of fact, differs from the image because it contains the *raison d'être* of the object which it represents *{quod quid est, seu ratio intima proprietatum),* whilst the common image of the Nominalists, to which a common name is assigned, contains only the external notes of the object in juxtaposition, revealing them to us without rendering them intelligible. The idea and the image are often contrasted by saying that the idea is abstract and universal, while the image is concrete and particular. In case of a composite image with a common name, the contrast between it and the idea is not so pronounced. Moreover, the character of abstraction is merely a property of the idea, and even a property of the human idea, *qua* human, derived from sensible data. Universality is also but a property of the idea, and does not designate its essence. Whether we consider the human, the angelic or the divine idea, the essence of the idea, *qua* idea, is that it contains the formal object of the intellect, *qua* intellect, that is to say, *being,* or the *raison d'être.*

An example cited by Vacant in his *Etudes Comparées sur la Philosophie de St. Thomas d'Aquin et celle de Scot* (Vol. I, p. 134) will help us to understand what is meant by the intuition of the intelligible in the most rudimentary kind of intellectual knowledge. "Place a savage in the presence of a locomotive," he writes; "have him walk around it, and give him time to examine it and other similar machines. So long as he only sees them running, and is content to observe the various parts of their mechanism, he will have but a sensible and particular knowledge of them (or, if you wish, a common image, accompanied by a name, just as a parrot would have). But if he is intelligent, he will sooner or later come to realize that there *must* be in such an object a motive power, which the locomotive either generates or

applies. . . . If he finally learns that it is by the expansion of the imprisoned vapor that this motive power is obtained, he will understand what a locomotive is *{quod quid est)* and will form a specific concept thereof. . . . The senses perceive only its material elements, a black mass of iron, with a special arrangement of parts. The idea represents something *immaterial;* it gives the why and wherefore of this arrangement and of the functioning of the various parts. Consequently, the idea becomes stamped with the mark of *necessity,* and by it we see that every locomotive must move, granted the conditions for which previously we could find no reason. The idea, finally, is *universal,* and by means of it we understand that all machines thus constructed have the same power and attain the same end."

The common image of the locomotive contained merely the common sensible elements in a state of juxtaposition, and did not explain their *raison d'être* nor render them intelligible.

This is what is generally understood by abstractive intuition of the intelligible element or the *raison d'etre* of an object. Let us now take an example from rational psychology, say, the idea of man. This idea is something more than a merely mechanical juxtaposition and association of common traits possessed by all human beings, such as those of rationality, freedom, morality, religion, sociability, etc. It also renders all these traits intelligible, by showing that the first of them, rationality, is the *raison d'etre* of all the rest; it expresses *what man is {quod quid est).* That which constitutes man truly a man, is not liberty, or morality, or religion, or sociability, or even the power of speech, but reason; for from reason all the other traits are deduced. The ability to reason becomes intelligible when the fact is established that the *raison d'etre* of the three operations of the mind (simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning) is an essential relation between the intellect and *being,* which is its formal object.

In truth, we must admit that the Nominalists are right in maintaining that there are but few ideas susceptible of becoming fully intelligible, namely, those which can be referred to *being,* which is the primary objective light of man's intellectual cognitions. These ideas are principally those which belong to what Aristotle *(Met.,* Bk. X, c. iii) calls the third degree of abstraction, *i. e.,* abstraction from all matter; they appertain to the metaphysical, spiritual, and moral order (ideas of being, unity, truth, goodness; the idea of intellect, defined in terms of its relation to being; the idea of will, defined in terms of its relation to goodness. In this class must also be included the ideas of the primary divisions of being, such as potency and act, and the four causes). In the second degree of abstraction (mathematical abstraction, which is concerned, not with sensible qualities, but only with quantity, continuous or discrete), the intelligibility is less, although the study of these sciences comes easier to man, because their object is less abstract and nearer to the senses. Finally, in the first degree of abstraction, we have the natural sciences, which are concerned with sensible qualities, merely abstracting from individual circumstances; here we can give empirical and descriptive definitions, but we can never come to know the *intelligible properties* of an object, explaining their *raison d'etre* by a specific difference. Most of the time we have to be satisfied with a statement of general facts, and the low degree of intelligibility found in these sciences—as we have just seen in the case of the savage and the locomotive—arises from the application of the metaphysical principles of causality and finality, which the intellect spontaneously perceives in *being.*

Such, then, is the abstractive intuition of the intelligible in the first operation of the mind, which is denied by the Sensualists and the subjectivistic Idealists.

c) *Confirmation: "Being" occupies the first place in the two processes of judgment and reasoning.* In the second operation of

the mind, that of judgment, we also see the falsity of these two systems and the truth of traditional Realism. What radically differentiates judgment from the association of ideas by which the Empirics seek to explain this mental process, is that this association is merely a mechanical juxtaposition of two images, whereas judgment by the verb *"is"* affirms the real identity of the subject with the predicate of a proposition, which are but logically distinct. The verb *"is"* constitutes the very soul of every judgment. As Aristotle remarks *{Met.,* Bk. V, c. vii), "there is no difference between these two propositions: 'this man is in good health,' and 'this man is healthy'; nor between these: 'this man is walking, advancing on the road,' and 'this man walks, advances on the road'; the same is true of the other cases." By using the copula "is" we affirm that the being called man *is (i. e.,* is the same as) the being that is in good health. Empiricism is sufficiently refuted by this simple observation. As J. J. Rousseau remarked, "the distinctive sign of an intelligent being is the ability to give a meaning to this little word *is,* which he utters every time he pronounces a judgment."

At the same time we perceive the falsity of the subjectivistic Rationalism of Kant, as proved by Msgr. Sentroul in his thesis, *"L'objet de la Métaphysique selon Kant et Aristote"* (Louvain, 1905, a work crowned by the Kantgesellchaft of Halle). "Kant, maintaining the very opposite of what Aristotle taught," says this writer, "failed to realize that all knowledge expresses itself exactly in the verb *to be,* the copula of every judgment, . . . that the union of the predicate with the subject by means of the verb *to be,* used as the sign of identity between the terms, constitutes the formal essence of every judgment. . . . The knowledge of anything consists precisely in perceiving its identity with itself from two different points of view. *(Met.,* Bk. v, c. vii). To know what a triangle is, means to know that it *is* a certain figure, the

cause, to know that the effect *is* included in it, the man, to know that he is endowed with the power of imagination. And to take a purely accidental judgment, to say of some particular wall that it *is* white, is to say of this wall that it *is* a white wall. . . . If the subject and the predicate refer to each other in such a way that they can be connected by the verb *to be,* this is because both predicate and subject express one and the same reality (either possible or actual)." Kant acknowledges identity only in what he calls analytical judgments, pure tautologies in his opinion, and not in extended judgments, which alone add to the sum of human knowledge and which he calls synthetical *a priori* or *a posteriori,* because they are formed, according to his view, by the juxtaposition of distinct notions. He thus misunderstood the fundamental law of all judgment. Msgr. Sentroul (p. 224) truly remarks that "a judgment formed by the juxtaposition or the convergence of various notions would be a *false* judgment, since it would express identity between two terms which are not identical, but merely related to each other in some odier way. . . . Aristotle's principle of distinction between propositions is not the identification or non-identification of the predicate with the subject: he distinguishes them according as the knowledge of this identity (not logical, but real) is derived solely from the analysis of the ideas or from the scrutiny of existing things." Like the sophists of old, Kant must maintain that we have no right to say, "the man is good," but only, "the man is the man, the good is the good;" but this amounts to a denial of the possibility of any judgment whatever. (Cfr. Plato, *Sophist.,* 251 B.; Aristotle, *Met.,* Bk. V, c. 29). The reason of this opposition between Kant and the traditional philosophy is that Kant, starting with the subject, considers the categories as purely logical, whereas Scholastic philosophy, which starts from *being,* regards the categories as partly logical and partly ontological. What was separated by ab-

straction from the real is thus reconstructed and restored to it by the affirmative judgment, and the entire life of the intellect can be explained by its ordination to *being.*

As for the necessity of starting from *being,* we have already seen that it is mandatory, under pain of rendering absurd all the elements—the object, the idea, the act of thinking and the intellectual faculty of knowledge.

The third operation of the mind, that of syllogistic reasoning, like the two preceding ones, cannot be anything else but the act of a faculty which has *being* as its formal object. Whereas empirical findings, governed as they are by the laws of the association of ideas, are but a series of images in juxtaposition, reasoning gives us the (extrinsic) *raison d'être* of the less known in that which is known more explicitly. The demonstration *a priori* gives us the extrinsic reason of what *has been affirmed* by the conclusion. The demonstration *a posteriori* gives us the extrinsic reason why *something has been affirmed.* Direct or ostensive demonstrations are founded on the principle of identity, which is immediately implied in the idea of *being* (tire syllogistic process is based upon the principle that two things equal to the same third thing [middle term] are equal to each other). Indirect demonstrations, also known as *reductio ad absurdum,* rest on the principle of contradiction, which is merely a negative formulation of the principle of identity. Inductive reasoning rests on the principle of induction, which is a derivative of the principle of the *raison d'être.* If the same cause, in the same circumstances, did not produce the same effect, the change in the effect, without a previous change in the cause or the circumstances, would be without a *sufficient reason* for its existence. For the Empiric, who reduces the concept to a common image with a common name, *the syllogism must be a needless repetition,* as Sextus Empiricus, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer held. Since the major is not a universal statement, but merely expresses a congeries of individual cases, it

presupposes that all the particular cases, including the one mentioned in the conclusion, have been verified. From this point of view any rational proof of the existence of God is evidently impossible, nor can there be any truly scientific knowledge even of sensible things, because induction no longer has any foundation in fact.17

Finally, the first principles which constitute the basis of all reasoning, are immediately perceived in *being,* which is the primary object of abstractive intuition on the part of the intellect. "The intellect naturally knows being, and all which directly pertains to being, considered as such, and the knowledge of first principles has its foundation in this cognition of being." (St. Thomas, *C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. 83, § 32). A child does not need to be taught the principles of identity, contradiction, substance, sufficient reason, causality, and finality. It seeks for the cause of everything that attracts its attention, and wearies its elders by constantly asking for the reason why. As Aristotle remarks *(Anal. Post.,* Bk. I, c. 1), if the child had no knowledge of these principles, the teacher could not influence its mind; for all instruction assumes some previous knowledge in the pupil.19

19) *Objections of the Idealists: We cannot start from being; something corresponding to thought is a necessity. Reply.*

i. The subjectivistic Idealist raises this objection: "You always start from *being,* and not from the *representation* of being. How can you be sure of the validity of this representation, since you cannot compare it with the object itself, as it exists outside of the mind, and since it is impossible for you to establish an immediate contact with the object?" Moreover, Le Roy maintains "that Ontological Realism is absurd and disastrous; an external something, beyond thought, is by its very nature impossible of conception. This objection will always remain unanswerable, and

17 Sec Lachelier, *Le Fondement de l'induction.*

we shall have to conclude, as all modern philosophy does, that we are under the necessity of admitting some form of Idealism." [18]

This difficulty is not new, for Protagoras and other Sophists raised it centuries ago, as may be seen from the fourth Book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* where it is refuted. St. Thomas (Ia, q. 85, a. 2) reproduces this objection in the following form: "Nothing is known, except it is in the mind of the knowing subject. Now, extra-mental realities cannot be in the mind of the knowing subject. Therefore, they cannot be known; the ideas in our mind are all that we can know."

St. Thomas replies by distinguishing the major: nothing is known, except it is *in* the knowing subject, either by itself, or by its likeness *(intentionalis')*—this I concede; but if the proposition means that the object itself must be in the knowing subject, the statement is false. Now, it is evident that extra-mental realities cannot be in the mind of the knowing subject *per se,* but they can be there by representation. And it is the special purpose of this representation, which is essentially relative *(intentionalis)* to the object represented, to make known the object by a direct act of the mind, without being known itself. The representation becomes known only afterwards by means of reflection. The idea impressed upon the mind, or the idea expressed by it, are both the means by which the mind knows the object, and not the object which it knows. It is essentially what the Scholastics call *"intentionalis,"* a term which means that it refers to what is represented by the idea; and if this idea is a simple one, like that of *being* and other such primary notions, it cannot be an artificially composite notion, which would misrepresent the reality.[19]

18 "Comment se pose le problème de Dieu," in the *Revue de Met. et de Mor.,* July, 1907, pp. 448 and 495.

19 See St. Thomas, S. *Theol.,* Ia, q. 85, a. 6: "Whether the intellect can err." *"Properly speaking,"* he says, *"the intellect is not deceived concerning the quiddity oj a thing.* . . . It may, however, be accidentally deceived concerning the quid-

To grasp the meaning of this reply, we must fully understand what is meant by the term representation or idea. The Idealists declare that "something external to or beyond thought is by its very definition unthinkable," because they consider the idea as an isolated *object* and not as a manifest *relation.* They find fault with traditional philosophy for considering space as belonging to the imaginative order. But from the way in which they view it as external to thought, we may say that they commit the same error. *This concept of the representation is entirely quantitative and material.* Though this may seem paradoxical, Idealism has a completely materialistic conception of the idea, which it regards as a *material portrait,* situated in some point of space and capable of being itself considered as an object, independently of the person whom it represents. It is like the effigy stamped on a coin. In direct contrast to this, the cognitive faculty (the intellect and, for that matter, even the sense), like the representation by means of which it knows the object, is *a living and immaterial quality,* not something closed, shut up within itself, but essentially relative to something other than itself, which it represents to itself. This function belongs to it by its very nature *{quid proprium).* Therefore, far from a something beyond thought being unthinkable, thought is not intelligible except as a living relation to something external, which it expresses. We could not possibly judge of the validity of the idea, if it were in the direct act, as a material portrait, the very object of knowledge: for in that case we should have to compare this interior object with an intangible external object. In matter of fact, however, the idea in the direct act of knowing is not the object of knowledge, after the manner of a picture or a statue. It is only the means by which

dity of *composite things* (on the part of the composition affecting the definition). . . . As regards simple objects not subject to composite definitions, we cannot be deceived, unless we understand nothing whatever about them, as is said in *Metaph.,* IX, c. x."

the object is known.[20] Because it is a vital, immaterial quality, entirely relative to something other than itself, it reveals the presence of things without being itself revealed. Afterwards, by means of reflection, the intellect assures itself of the validity of this means, of its conformity with the extra-mental object, because, as St. Thomas remarks,[21] "the intellect knows its ideas and its own direct act by reflection, and it not only knows, like the senses, the *fact* of its own activity, but also the *nature* of its act, and hence *its own nature as an intellective faculty,* which is that it is essentially relative and in conformity with being." It sees that if complex ideas can accidentally imply an error in uniting elements incompatible with the reality, such cannot be the case with primary ideas on account of their simplicity.

In its ultimate analysis this doctrine implies that the *immateriality* of the representation is the principle of its power of *representation. "Cognoscens secundum quod cognoscens differt a non cognoscentibus prout* fit aliud *in quantum aliud; et hoc immaterialitatem supponit"* ("by the mere fact that a being knows, it differs from those who do not know, in that it becomes some *other thing,* in as much as it has the form of that other thing; and this presupposes immateriality") (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 14, a. 1). Like Aristotle *(De Anima,* Bk. II, c. xii; Bk. Ill, c. viii) the Angelic Doctor considers it to be a fact that the animal, by reason of sensation, in a certain way *becomes the other beings* which it sees and hears, whereas the plant is shut up

20 Dunan, in his work entitled, *The Two Idealisms* (Alcan), has clearly set forth this traditional conception.

21 "Truth is in the intellect, as following the act of intellection, and as what is known by the intellect. It follows the operation of the intellect in that the judgment of the intellect deals with the quiddity of the thing. By reflecting upon its act, the intellect knows not only its own act, but also that its cognition is in conformity with the object of cognition. And this can be so only because it knows *the nature of its own act,* which it cannot know unless it knows the *nature of its active principle,* namely, the intellect itself, which by its very nature postulates conformity with the object. Therefore, the intellect knows the truth by the very fact that it reflects upon itself." *(De Veritate,* q. 1, a. 9; cfr. also q. 2, a. 2).

within itself. And, far from denying this fact, under the pretext that something external to or beyond thought is an impossibility, he explains it by the *immateriality* of the cognitive faculty. Why is it that the animal, by its senses, responds to everything in the sensitive order, and, so to speak, *goes out of itself,* beyond the limits of its corporeity? This sortie would be inexplicable if it were of the spatial order; but, on the contrary, it presupposes a certain independence with regard to extended matter, that is to say, a certain spirituality. The representation in the irrational animal is of an order superior to tire material bodies which it represents, because it is the act of an *animated organ* (and not of the soul alone), it can be born of the impression gained from these material things. It is a quality essentially relative to them, somewhat like the reflection of an object formed in a mirror, with this difference, that the eye is a living mirror which sees. Being by its very nature essentially relative or intentional, the representation cannot be that which is known first, but in the direct act it makes known the object which it represents without being known itself *(non est quod cognoscitur, sed quo').* It is not something closed, but openly in contact with the object to which it essentially refers, and thus leads us immediately to the object and determines the cognitive faculty to know the same, like a *fire started* in a grate, which essentially refers to the luminous object or to the source of the heat which it produces.

What has already been realized in the simple form of sensible cognition in the animal, namely, the spontaneous transition from the ego to the non-ego (even to the imaginary non-ego), cannot be explained in any other way. To say that all sensation has a tendency to become objective, similar to that which we notice in the case of hallucination, is to explain a primitive fact by a derived fact. Every hallucination presupposes anterior sensations; one born blind never has visual hallucinations. “One might just as well explain the sound by the echo.”

Moreover, this tendency towards objectivation would still be but a fact which must be made intelligible. The reason why we do not objectivate our emotions, but only our sensations, is because the latter alone are essentially intentional or representative.[22]

Finally, as the contemporary English Neorealists point out, if Idealism is true, then cerebral perception is just as subjective as that of the external universe, and consequently the brain no longer acts as an intermediary which separates sensation from its objects, and prevents it from coming in contact with them. Directly the external universe is perceived, either the cerebral phenomenon is real, though not perceived, which is contrary to the accepted principle of Idealism, *"esse est percipi";* or else this cerebral phenomenon, not being perceived, is unreal, and in that case it no longer impedes the immediate external perception of the universe. Thus one of the principal arguments in defence of Idealism falls to the ground.[23]

In the case of intellectual cognition, which is purely immaterial, the transition from the ego to the non-ego is not only spontaneous, but also reflexive, and the ego and the non-ego are known precisely as such. This is in fact the very first "morcellation" (division) of being into object and subject, into absolute (entitative) and intentional being. In simple apprehension the intellect obtains a knowledge of being, of something which is, before it knows itself; for how could it know itself in a state of vacuity before it has acquired a knowledge of anything? But in this first apprehension, the intellect knows being without knowing it precisely as non-ego. Later on, the absolute spirituality of the intellect enables it to reflect fully upon itself, and thus to know not only that its act is an *actual fact,* but also what is the nature of

22 St. Thomas, *De Anima,* Bk. Ill, Leet. 8; ta, q. 85, a. 2, c, ad turn et ad 2um.

23 Cfr. McGilvary, "The Physiological Argument against Realism," in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods,* Oct. 14, 1907.

that act and thereby to perceive its own immateriality as an essentially relative faculty in conformity with intelligible *being.* The intellect then judges being as something distinct from itself, *i. e.,* as a non-ego. (St. Thomas, *De Veritate,* q. 1, a. 9 and q. 2, a. 2). This division of being into absolute and intentional must be admitted, otherwise all three operations of the intellect become meaningless.

Therefore, it is not Ontological Realism which is "absurd and disastrous," but Idealism, which is absolutely inconceivable. A representation which does not represent anything, would be at the same time and in the same respect both relative and non-relative. Idealism is as disastrous as it is absurd (cfr. no. 17) ; it locks up man within himself, as it were, preventing him from recognizing even the reality of his own action, and thus destroys all knowledge and reduces man to the condition of the plant, *ὁμοωι φυτώ* (IV *Metaph.,* c. iv). It must be so unless it be claimed that human thought, like divine thought, is identical with being; but in that case man must be omniscient and there can be no mystery for him. (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 79, a. 2). Either God or the plant—we must choose one of the two.

A close study of the first principles of knowledge makes it increasingly evident that between the traditional philosophy and Idealism, the question of paramount importance is to know whether we are at least certain of the objectivity of the principle of non-contradiction or identity.[24]

It is evident for us that the absurd is not only *unthinkable,* but that it is also *really impossible,* or in itself impossible of realization, even for the *Omnipotent Being,* if such a one exists. That which is *impossible of realization* stands *de facto* in correlation to the *unthinkable.* Now the real impossibility of the absurd is for us an evident fact, the very first, anterior and superior to

24 This objectivity was subjected to unreasonable doubt by Descartes at the end of his *Discours sur la Méthode.*

that of Descartes' *"cogito."* We feel ourselves dominated and regulated by it, that is to say, by *evident being,* which excludes non-being or contradiction. In this first of all its acts, that of adherence to being, the created intellect manifests itself as potential and conditioned.[25]

This primordial evidence is a *fact attested by the reason* or the intellect. By what *secret process* this fact is established, remains for us a profound mystery, because it is an entirely *immaterial* process, and too dazzling a light in itself for the feeble vision of our intellect. In this life we have but indirect knowledge of the *immaterial,* by way of analogy with material things; and we know the properties of things only in a negative and relative sense, by saying that they are not material and that their vitality is superior to that of the senses. Hence the obscurity of all our theories of knowledge. But simply because the intrinsic nature of a thing remains for us obscure, we can neither deny the *fact itself* of knowledge nor give an explanation of it, which is tantamount to a denial of the same by introducing the element of contradiction into each of its component parts. It is this which Idealism does. (See no. 17). Philosophical reflection must explain this process of knowledge in harmony with the nature of things, and not in opposition to it. The theories must interpret the facts and not deny them. If the theories are obliged to assume illusions of nature, then they are illusory themselves. *In proving the natural range of the intellect with regard to being, we must not deprive it of its essential relationship to being; one does not have to breaks a spring in order to test its strength.*

About twenty-five years ago Rousselot wrote on this point:[26] "After having assured oneself of the evidence of being and the fact of its affirmation, it remains to give a satisfactory account of

28 See P. Lepidi, O.P., *Ontologia,* p. 35.

20 *"Métaphysique Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance,"* in *La Revue Néoscolastique de Philosophie,* Nov. X910, pp. 501-508.

the meaning and validity of this fact. Failure to see or to accept this duty would be to finish too soon with philosophy and to mutilate it. . . . To be sure, this explanation can be given only by the application of some system of metaphysics. Now, if it is given by means of the metaphysics which starts from the 'philosophy of being' and which satisfies dogmatic reason before any critical question arises, the problem is solved." On his part Rousselot believes that we must explain our first affirmation of being (that being exists or that the reality is intelligible being) by saying that this affirmation "marks the transition to the act expressive of that *desire for the divine* known as *intellection;"* and he adds that, according to St. Thomas, "it is God who first arouses the rational appetite of a creature to action." *{Ibid.,* p. 505).

We never claimed that our first affirmation of being did not need to be explained; and it is clear that it can be explained by means of the four causes. On the contrary, we have always explained it[27] by actual immateriality of the intellect, which by reflection can know not only the fact of its own activity, but the very nature of its act, and of this act towards its own self, which essentially refers to being. We have elucidated this point by giving in substance the argument of St. Thomas in *De Veritate,* q. 1, a. 9, and q. 2, a. 2. We admit then, with Rousselot, that the certitude of the objectivity of our knowledge has its foundation not only in a formulated principle, such as that of contradiction, but also in the knowledge which the mind has of its own nature whenever it reflects upon its actions. Criticism must try to grasp the full meaning and range of this act of reflection.

After that, we may consider ourselves as having passed not only beyond the stage of spontaneous discovery of being and its

27 Sec *Le Sens Commun et la Philosophie de l'Être,* p. 100; *Dictionnaire Apologétique,* article "Dieu," cols. 1002 and 1003.

principles *(in via inventionis'),* but also beyond that of critical reflection, and to be in possession of those ontological principles by which the ultimate reasons of things are made known. The reason or ultimate cause of our certitude may then be discovered *a posteriori,* and thus the point of departure of the argument for the existence of a prime intellectual mover will be the fact that our intellect is itself moved whenever it is in action. (See further on, no. 36, c). We may also suppose this supreme cause to be already known and by means of it give an *a priori* explanation of the objectivity of our knowledge.28

In this ontological order of the ultimate reasons of things, we must say that the supreme foundation of the certitude that our intellect has concerning the objectivity of first principles is to be found in God, inasmuch as our intellect is a participated likeness of the Divine Intellect, which is absolutely identical with Being itself. Though St. Thomas rejects Platonism and the theory of the Ontologists that necessary and eternal truths are intuitively known by us in God, he admits that, in this life, God is in a certain sense the source of our knowledge, in that the natural light of our intellect is a participated likeness of the divine and uncreated light, and that, in order to operate, the intellect needs to be illumined by the self-same intelligent and subsistent Being. "The intellectual light which is in us," he says, "is nothing else but a certain participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal types." (Ia, q. 84, a. 5). Else-

28 Sec St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 79, a. 8: "Whether reason is distinct from the intellect. Human reason, by way of seeking and finding, advances from certain things simply understood, which are tile first principles. And again, by way of judgment it returns analytically to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found" (critical reflection). In the following article St. Thomas discusses another *via judicii,* not critical, but strictly metaphysical, and by this other method of judgment everything is judged from a higher point of view by God Himself, who is now actually known: "By way of finding, we come through knowledge of temporal things to that of things eternal. - - - By way of judgment, from eternal things already known, we judge of temporal things."

where he writes that "there must needs be some higher intellect, by which the soul is helped to understand." (la, q. 79, a. 4). This illuminative divine concurrence is required not only for the first act of our intellect, but for all its acts.[29]

Pure intellect, containing no imperfection, is identical with pure being; but an intellect that is imperfect cannot be identified with imperfect being as its proper object; for otherwise it would no longer be an intellect at all. And the intellect cannot attain to such being except by the illuminating guidance of that First Intellect, who is the self-subsistent and intelligent Being. This is the ultimate reason assigned by metaphysics to our primary affirmation of being. But this explanation presupposes *{quoad nos)* the proofs for the existence of God, and cannot, therefore, be adduced as their principle; it merely confirms them by giving the fundamental ontological and ultimate cause of our certitude.

Rousselot goes even farther. "If the soul responds sympathetically to being as such," he says, "the final reason for this is because the soul is capable of communing with God" (Z. *c„* p. 504). The affirmation of being "marks the transition to the act expressive of the desire for the divine known as intellection" (p. 505). This explanation, which reminds us in certain respects of that given by Rosmini, in our opinion is wrong, in that it defines the intellect not in its relation to being, but in its relation to the divine.[30] As a matter of fact, the intellect and being are two correlative analogues; only the divine intellect refers directly to

29 St. Thomas clearly distinguishes between this divine concurrence and supernatural grace in the la IIae, q. 109, a. 1: "Whether without grace man can know any truth." We read there: "Hence we must say that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever, man needs the divine help, so that the intellect may be moved to its act. But he docs not need a new light added to his natural light, in order to know the truth in all things, but only in some that surpass his natural knowledge." (See Gonet, *Clypeus Thomisticus de Gratia,* tr. VIII, disp. 1, a. I.)

30 On this point sec the article by Fr. Gardcil, O.P., in the *Revue Néo-scolastique,* Nov., 1910, pp. 504 ff., entitled *"Faculté du Divin ou Faculté de l'Ètre."* See also *Revue Thomiste,* 1913, pp. 460–472. Likewise *Chronique de Métaphysique* by Fr. Le Rohellec, C.S.S.P.

divine being, with which it is identical; the created intellect refers to created being,[31] and comes to know God by this means. Moreover, that the intellect knows of the certitude it has acquired, in which intellection more specifically consists, Rousselot attributes to its natural inclination *{appetitus naturalis'),* a characteristic of the will and of every other faculty.[32]

That which belongs to a species as its property cannot be explained by what is common to all species of the same genus. In fact, the certitude of our primary affirmation of being is explained by the objective evidence of being, and by the very nature of our intellect when influenced by the divine, the former being a participated likeness of subsistent intellection, which includes in its embrace both the subsistent Being and all possible beings of which the Supreme Being is the exemplar. God has a pure and absolutely immediate intuition of purely intelligible Being; our human intellect abstracts the intelligible from its sensible surroundings, and hence has an abstractive intuition of the intelligible.

31 Created being is the proper or proportionate object of the human intellect. God, as He is in Himself, is included only in the adequate object of the human intellect: for it is not within the scope nor is it the natural bent of the created intellect to know God as He is in Himself, unless reinforced by the essentially supernatural light of faith. Previous to the reception of this supernatural light there is in our intellect but an obediential potency or *passive capacity* of being raised to the supernatural order. John of St. Thomas (in Iam, q. 12, disp. XIV, a. 2, no. II) points out why the Thomists could not admit, with Suarez, the existence of an active obediential potency. It would be *essentially natural,* by reason of its being a natural property of the intellect, and also *essentially supernatural,* in that the intellect would be specified by a supernatural object. This would virtually mean that the natural and the supernatural order are not *essentially* and necessarily distinct, but only actually so. (See also Billuart in Iam, q. 12, diss. IV, a. 5, § HI).

32 "Certainty is always found in one of two ways, either essentially or by participation. The certitude of the cognitive faculty undoubtedly is essential. But it is found by participation in everything which is infallibly moved to its end by the cognitive faculty. When it is said that *nature* operates with certainty, in that it is moved by the Divine Intellect, since everything is moved with certainty to its end by this Intellect, it is certainty by way of participation that is meant." (See 2a zae, q. 18, a. 4, *De Certitudine Spei).*

2. *Second objection of the Idealists.* Because thought is immaterial, a new difficulty presents itself. The intelligible known by our intellect is not real unless it is found in the things themselves. But how can it be found in the sensible things from which it is said to be abstracted, since it is not contained in them? As there can be nothing actually intelligible, immaterial, and universal in sensible things, the intelligible, the object of our intellectual cognition, is not real.

This is the classical objection against the solution given by Traditional Realism to the problem of universals. St. Thomas foresaw and solved it in his *Summa* (la, q. 85, a. 2, ad 2um). That the intelligible, he says, cannot be present in material things in the abstract, immaterial, and universal mode in which it is found in the mind, I concede; that it cannot be there without this mode on account of its nature or essence known by the intellect, I deny. "In speaking of the intelligible, the universal, the abstract, we imply one of two things—the nature of the thing known, and its actual intelligibility, universality or abstraction. Nature, *e. g.,* humanity which is intellectually understood, abstracted or considered as universal, exists only in individuals, while that mode which is actual intelligibility, universality, abstraction, exists only in the intellect. We have something similar to this in the senses. For sight perceives the color of the apple apart from the smell. If it be asked, where is the color which is seen apart from the smell, the answer is: in the apple. But that the color is perceived without the smell, is owing to the sight, since the faculty of sight receives the likeness of color and not of smell." [83]

3. *Third objection.* Our concepts cannot express as universal what the senses perceive as singular. Now, the senses perceive only sensible phenomena. Therefore, our concepts are valid merely as representative of phenomena.

33 For an explanation of this passage, which contains a refutation of the Kantian objections, see Zigliara, *Summa Philosophica,* Vol. 1; *Ontologia,* Bk. I, c. I, articles *3* and 6.

The answer to this objection is included in what has been said above in connection with Idealism. Our concepts cannot represent as universal what our senses perceive as individual, whether what is perceived be directly or only accidentally sensible. That the senses perceive only sensible phenomena, which do not constitute the direct and proper object of the sensitive faculties, is true. But it is *not* true that the senses do not perceive the subject of phenomena, being and substance, even accidentally. It is not color in general that is perceived by the sense of sight, but a colored object, inasmuch as it is colored; the intellect, on the other hand, perceives being and substance in the object, it reads in the phenomena *(intus legit),* at least indistinctly, the principle of their intelligibility, the essence of which they are the property (Cf. St. Thomas, *De Anima,* Bk. II, Leet. 13; *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 17, a. 2*;* q. 78, a. 3, ad 2um).

4. *Fourth Objection.* After all, the ontological validity of first ideas and first principles depends upon the validity of sensation. Now, the knowledge acquired by the senses cannot have metaphysical, but only physical certainty, derived from experience. Therefore, we cannot be metaphysically certain of the ontological validity of first ideas and first principles.

Reply. The ontological validity of first ideas and first principles depends upon the validity of sensation—not as if this latter were the real reason in some formal and intrinsic manner of that ontological validity; the dependence must be interpreted as meaning that sensation in some material and extrinsic way is a predisposing cause and a required condition. The real reason for the certainty of this ontological validity is not the evidence obtained from sense experience, but belongs to the intellectual order, and is a vision of the intellect, not of the senses. For this reason the certitude is metaphysical and superior to that acquired by the senses. As St. Thomas remarks: "It cannot be said that sensible knowledge is the total and perfect cause of intellectual

knowledge, but rather that it is in a way the material cause. . . . We must not expect the entire truth from the senses. For the light of the active intellect *(intellectus agens)* is needed, through which we achieve the unchangeable truth of changeable things and discern the things themselves from their likenesses." (Ia, q. 84, a. 6, ad rum). "All the certitude of the knowledge that we have depends upon the certitude of the principles . . . and therefore, that anything is known for certain is due to the fact that man has been divinely endowed with that interior light of reason by which God speaks in us." (St. Thomas, *De Veritate,* q. ii, a. i, ad 13 et lyum). The intellect, by the light that is in it, and by means of its own principles, judges of the validity of sensation, of which it makes use.[84] Intelligible being and its opposition to not-being are known by the *human intellect* before it judges of the validity of sensation, nay, even before abstraction is assigned as the reason of this knowledge. Then, by means of the light of being and certain first principles, it judges of the validity of sensation and of abstraction. It is in this way that *philosophical reason* is able to proceed in the critical discussion of metaphysical questions, as Aristotle did. (See *Metaph.,* Bk. IV). It can defend the ontological validity of the notion of being and of the principle of contradiction, by a simple analysis of the terms: intellect and idea. This it is able to do even before it solves the problem of the origin of ideas. Hence a number of contemporary Scholastics, such as Zigliara, in their refutation of Scepticism solved the criteriological problem before they considered the question of the origin of ideas, which was assigned by them to rational psychology. A sensation which is the record of no sense perception would be contrary to the principle of contradiction; a sensation which is not the effect of a determining external cause

84 What is a cause in one order becomes an effect in another order; but the formal cause is absolutely prior to the material cause. Our intellection presupposes sensation in the material order, but formally it passes judgment on sensation.

would be contrary to the principle of causality. If the purpose of the senses as such is not to know the realities of sense perception, then they are contrary to the principle of finality. It may happen that the senses are deceived, even as regards their proper object, but this is due to some organic defect. (See la, q. 17, a. 2). On the other hand, the intellect can never be deceived concerning primary and simple ideas and first principles. (la, q. 17, a. 3, c., and ad 2um). The natural certitude of these principles persists in spite of the systematic errors by which they are deprived of their original meaning, or even denied. These errors are like a cloud of the imagination on the fringe of the intellect, and they cannot succeed in penetrating the faculty so as to change it completely; for that would mean the complete destruction of reason itself. "We do not always have to think as we speak," was Aristotle's remark to those who denied the principle of contradiction. (IV *Met.,* c. iii).

Thus all our explanations eventually lead us back to those primary ideas and first principles, and to the intellectual light which reveals them to us. The object of these ideas and principles is evident, since it is being itself, which is evident. With regard to the intellectual light, it makes known everything to us, but in this life we do not know it as it actually is, namely, in its pure immateriality. When we wish to tell what it is, we are obliged to describe it by analogy, in terms applicable to material light and its effects; when we wish to state in what it formally consists, we make use of negative and relative terms, by saying that it is a non-material light and a vivid light, emanating from a faculty superior in vitality to that of the senses. We describe this light by means of a sensible image, since it is too brilliant for us to perceive in its pure immateriality. In this life our intellect, functioning as it does in connection with the senses, when confronted with this light, resembles an owl looking at the sun; for it is only by reason of the reflection of this

light in sensible things that the intellect sees it, making known its dormant intelligibility.[35] The fact that we are incapable of acquiring a direct and precise knowledge of the immaterial nature of our intellectual faculty, is the reason why, in this life, there will always be an element of obscurity in every theory of knowledge, no matter how true it may be. But because this obscurity remains even after all diligent inquiries have been made, we are not justified in rejecting what is undoubtedly certain. It is a task of critical philosophy not to suppress mysteries, but to take note of them when and wherever they occur, and to throw light upon them by means of analogies with things that are more familiar to us.

The certitude and the ontological validity of primary ideas and first principles is naturally and logically prior to the theory by which the philosopher seeks to explain *how* this certitude is acquired, *how* our intellect comes into contact with being, and is determined and measured by it. The theory advanced in explanation of the *exact manner* by which something comes into existence, necessarily presupposes the existence of this same thing as an established fact. The obscurities accompanying any theory advanced in explanation of the way in which the actualization of the intelligible hidden in the sensible thing is effected, and how it is that the intellect gets to know by means of this actualized intelligible, must not cause us to deny, as the Subjectivists do, the fact that the intellect does know in this manner. In testing the

35 St. Thomas, la, q. 87, a. I, 2, 3: "The human intellect is merely a potentiality in the genus of intelligible things, just as primary matter is a potentiality as regards sensible things; and hence it is called *possible.* Therefore, in its essence, the human mind is potentially understanding. Hence it has in itself the power to understand, but not to be understood, except as it is made actual. . . . And it is made actual by the species abstracted from sensible things. . . ." (la, q. 87, a. 1). Cajctan comments on this passage as follows: "Because the active intellect does not actuate the passive intellect directly as its object, but through the medium of the denaturalized intelligible species, to which its act is first of all directed, it follows that it cannot come to know itself by any reflective process, but requires the intervention of some object as its medium." *(Ib., a.* XV.)

power of our intellect, we must not strain it to the breaking point. We must proceed from the more certain to the less certain, and the obscurity of the latter must not cause us to reject the evidence of the former, no more than the difficulty of reconciling the immutability of God with divine freedom is a reason for doubting the existence of these two attributes, provided each has been logically deduced. If, in following strictly the rules of reasoning, we meet with certain obscurities, we must conclude that these veil a mystery, but not a contradiction. The classical theory of knowledge founded on the mutual relationship existing between being and intellect (considered in their vital aspects), and between intellect and being (objectively considered), in spite of its inevitable obscurities, nevertheless is in perfect conformity with the first principles of reason.[36]

Having defended the ontological validity of the idea of being, and of primary ideas in general, we must now take up the defence of the ontological validity of first principles and their absolute necessity, by showing what is their connection with being.

20) *Intuition of first principles. They are perceived in the idea of being, which is the formal object of the intellect. The transcendent principle (principle of identity') is the ultimate basis of every proof for the existence of God. The affirmation*

36 Concerning this theory, see Aristotle, *De Anima,* Bk. III, c. 5; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 79, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, and the Commentary of Cajetan; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus, De Anima,* q. 4 and q. to; Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana cum Antiqua el Nova Comparata,* Vols. VI and VII; Liberatore, *La Conoscenza Intellettuale,* 1857; Zigliara, *De la Lumière Intellectuelle,* Vol. II, pp. 18-135; Gonzalez, *Philosophia Elementaria,* pp. 500-542; Vacant, *Etudes Comparées sur la Philosophie de St. Thomas et sur celle de Scot,* Vol. I, pp. 88-107; D. de Vorges, *La Perception et la Psychologie Thomiste;* Peillaubc, *Théorie des Concepts;* P. Gardcil, *"Ce qu'il y a de vrai dans le Néo-scotisme" (Rev. Thomiste,* 1900 and 1901); Hugon, *Cursus Philosophiae Thomisticac,* Vol. IV, *Metaphysica Psychologica,* pp. 1-138; Sertillanges, *St. Thomas d'Aquin;* A. Farges, *La Crise de la Certitude,* 1907; H. Dehove, *Essai Critique sur le Réalisme Thomiste, comparé à l'idéalisme Kantien,* Lille, 1907; P. Rousselot, *L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas,* Paris, 1908.

of the objective validity of this transcendent principle tacitly implies the admission of the existence of the divine and transcendental being, who is absolutely identical with himself. In all forms of evolutionary Pantheism contradiction necessarily is the first principle.

By the process of analysis the philosophical reason refers these principles, which the intellect instinctively perceives in *being,* to *being* itself. We must give a detailed account of this connection, for it will furnish the answer to the objections of the Empiricists and of Kant against the necessity and the objective validity of the principles of sufficient reason and of causality. A critical survey of the principles of substance and finality will result in removing many of the difficulties which otherwise would greatly complicate the exposition of the proofs for the existence of God.

What the intellect first of all spontaneously perceives in being, is the truth of the *principle of identity and of the principle of non-contradiction. For "that which before aught else falls under apprehension, is being, the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Therefore, the first undemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time; this is based on the notion of being and not-being, and on this principle all others are based as is stated by the Philosopher in* Met., *IV, c.6, n. 10."* (St. Thomas, Ia Ilae, q. 94, a. 2.)

In the Ila Ilae, q. 1, a. 7, he writes: "The articles of faith serve the same purpose with regard to revealed truths, as self-evident principles do with regard to the truths acquired by natural reason. And in these principles there prevails a certain order, as some are positively included in others. Thus, all principles are finally reduced to this one, as to their first: 'It is impossible for the same thing to be affirmed and denied at the same time,' as is evident from what the Philosopher says in the Fourth Book of his *Metaphysics."*

A truth which has not been sufficiently emphasized is that, when we set down as an established fact the necessity and the objectivity of the principle of identity, it means that this principle is the ultimate basis of every proof for the existence of God, who is the self-subsisting Being, *"ipsum esse subsistens"* In explaining how the principle of identity is the fundamental law of thought and of reality, we are led to conclude that the fundamental reality, the Absolute, is in all things one and for all purposes identical with itself, Being itself, pure actuality, and, therefore, necessarily distinct from the world, which is composite and changing.

All the errors of the Empiricists and Subjectivists are refuted by means of this principle, which, therefore, must be fully discussed by us here.

St. Thomas, in his Commentary on the fourth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Leet. VI), proves that there must be a transcendent principle, by which simple apprehension and judgment, the first two operations of the mind, are compared. There can be no such thing as an indefinite series of concepts, for by the analysis of those which are more comprehensive than others we finally arrive at a first concept, the simplest and most universal of all, namely, the concept of *being*—that which exists or can exist. This idea of being, which is implied in all other ideas, must be absolutely the first for the intellect, which otherwise could form no concept of anything whatever. If, in the series of concepts, there is one that is first, then in the series of judgments also, there must be one that is first. And the first judgment, the simplest and most universal of all judgments, must depend upon the first idea, and *being* must be the subject of the proposition, and what first of all applies to *being* must constitute the predicate. By what formula can this truth be accurately expressed? Aristotle says that "it is impossible for anything to exist and not to exist at the same time and in the same sense." This axiom may be expressed in a sim-

pier form by saying: "That which is, cannot be that which is not." It is important to note carefully the order of these primary notions.

Idealistic evolutionism, not distinguishing between being in general and divine being, starts out, as can be seen in the case of Hegel, by accepting the idea of being and its opposition to not-being, but denies that this opposition is absolute. Let us see how St. Thomas views this question, following, as usual, the teaching of Aristotle.

Our intellect perceives first of all the idea of *being,* and *afterwards, by opposition, not-being;* it then formulates three affirmative propositions, to which correspond three negative propositions.[37]

The first of these propositions is: "Being is being," and the negative proposition corresponding to it: "Being is not the same as not-being." The second is that: "Everything that is being, is being," from which it follows that "no being can be not-being." The third is: "Every being either is or is not," from which it follows that "Nothing can at the same time be and not be."

In the first of the negative propositions we have the principle of contradiction, or rather the principle of non-contradiction, in its simplest form. Its corresponding affirmative may seem to be tautological. In matter of fact, however, the accompanying predicate serves a real purpose, as clearly appears if both propositions are combined into one, after the manner of Parmenides, to wit: Being is being, not-being is not-being. Such expressions serve a useful purpose, for when we wish to emphasize the difference between things we often say, for instance, that "flesh is flesh," and "spirit is spirit." But these two affirmative propositions, which are in opposition to each other, can be reunited in one negative by saying: "Being is not not-being."

It is in this formula, which manifestly excludes tautology, that

87 Sec Javclli, O.P., in *IV Metaphysical Aristotelis,* q. 6, £ol. 739.

St. Thomas and his school, following Aristotle, recognize the supreme principle of thought, which they call the principle of contradiction.

As for the principle of identity, it may be formulated thus: "Being is being, or, every being is being." Expressed in this simple, though apparently tautological form, the principle of identity precedes that of contradiction, and this for the reason that every negation must be based on an affirmation. But if we wish to express explicitly the notion of identity contained in the formula which enunciates the principle of identity, it must assume the simplest form of the principle of contradiction. In matter of fact, *identity* is *unity of substance,* just as similarity is unity of quality, and equality is unity of quantity.[38] The opposition between "the same," and "the other," and between "identical" and "different," presupposes that between "one" and "several." And the idea of unity or undivided being presupposes the ideas of "being," "not-being," and "division;"[39] and these ideas are all that we require to enable us to formulate the principle of contradiction.

If we wish to arrive at a clearer understanding of the explicit formulas of the principle of identity, we must note, as St. Thomas did, the order in which the notions of "being" *(ens),* "thing" *(res),* "unity" *(unum),* "something" *(aliquid),* "true" *(verum),* and "good" *(bonum),* follow one another. In *De Veritate,* q. 1, a. 1, St. Thomas explains this order as follows: "That which the intellect perceives first of all, and which is most evidently known by it, is being *(ens),* and it is into this concept that the in-

38 "When we say that things are the *same,* we mean that they are one in substance (which, interpreted in its fullest sense, means perfect unity); but the word *like* implies unity in quality, . . . and *equal* means unity in quantity." (St. Thomas, *In X Metaph.,* Leet. 4).

38 "The first of all notions reached by the human mind is that of simple 'being,' and then 'not-being,' 'division,' and 'oneness' follow in logical order; finally, the mind acquires the notion of 'multitude,' in which is implied that of division." (St. Thomas, *In IV Met.,* Leet. 3).

tellect resolves all its other concepts. All the other concepts, therefore, denote something which is added to being. But 'being' cannot receive any additions which are extrinsic to it, as is the case with additions accruing to a genus; for these differences, external to the idea of 'being,' would mean nothing; and all nature, even in that which is specific to it, is still essentially 'being.' Therefore, that which is added to 'being' cannot be extrinsic to it, but simply expresses *a mode of being* not denoted by the term 'being' itself. Amongst the modes of being we must distinguish (i) the *particular modes* which constitute the various genera or categories of the real, such as substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, etc.; (2) the *general modes* which belong to every being, to every substantial or accidental reality, and which transcend the categories, and for this reason are called transcendentals. These general modes are in turn subdivided, according as they apply to every being, either as considered in *itself,* or *relatively* to something else.

"What applies to every being considered as such, may apply to it either affirmatively or negatively. Affirmative predication is concerned first of all with the *essence,* which is expressed by the word 'thing' *(res).* This name, as Avicenna pointed out, differs from that of 'being,' in that 'being' denotes primarily the act of existing and through it that which exists; whereas the word 'thing' *(res)* primarily denotes the essence or quiddity of that which is.

"Negatively, what is predicated of every being as such is 'indivision,' which is expressed by the word 'one.' To say of a being that it is one, is to say that it is undivided. If a being were actually divided, it would have no determinate essence. If it is simple, it is undivided and indivisible; if it is composite, it ceases to be when it is divided. (See la, q. 11, a. 1).

"Relatively to some other thing than itself the name *'something* applies strictly to every being, precisely for the reason that it is

distinct from any other thing *{aliquid quasi aliud quid').* Hence every being is *one,* in so far as it is undivided in itself, and it is *something,* in so far as it is divided or distinct from others.

"Finally, every being may be considered relatively as referring to that which by its nature comes in contact with all things, that is to say, the soul or the spiritual nature in general, in which we distinguish a cognitive faculty and a volitional or appetitive faculty. The relation of being to intellect is expressed by the word 'true,' and its relation to appetite by the word good."

TABULATION OF THE MODES OF BEING.

BEING	'General modes	Absolute — Affirmative: Essence, expressed by the word "thing" *{res)* Negative: indivision, expressed by the word "one" *{unum)*
		Relative — to another thing distinct from it is:—"something" *{aliquid)* to the intellect—"true" *{verum)* to the appetitive faculty — "good" *{bonum)*
	Special modes. The Categories.	

The order in which these primary notions are arranged shows us the order of the formulas, more and more explicit, expressing the principle of identity. The simplest formula, as we have seen, is this: "Being is being, not-being is not-being," and it may be condensed into the negative formula of the principle of contradiction: "Being is not not-being." The identity of being, and of every being with itself, is expressed by the following formulas: "Every being is a thing," or, "Every being has an essence or nature." Or we may say: "Every being is one," and if we wish to emphasize the perfection of its unity, which means more than similarity or equality, we may add: "Every being is one and the same," or identical with itself. "It is one and the same thing," is an exprès-

sion frequently heard. Further, in relation to some other thing distinct from itself, we say that "Every being is something"—which means that it is some definite thing, some determinate nature, constituted as such by some property of its own, that it is one tiring and not another.

All these formulas are more or less explicit expressions of the principle of identity, of which the principle of contradiction is but the negative formula. Clearly all these formulas are implied in the notion of being, and in that of not-being. Being is being, not-being is not-being, flesh is flesh, spirit is spirit, good is good, evil is evil *{est est, non non)* ; a square is a square, a circle is a circle; that a square is a figure with four equal sides is of its very nature and cannot be otherwise. Peter is a human individual and cannot, while remaining Peter, cease to be a human individual. Every being has a definite nature; it is its own self and cannot at the same time be and not be what it actually is.

This is the first principle of our reason. It forms the basis of all direct demonstrations, which presuppose the *identity* of the terms employed, and rest on the real identity of the extremes with the middle term, to conclude that the extremes themselves are really identical. Indirect demonstrations, or those by the method of reduction to absurdity, are also based on this principle.

In conclusion, we may say that if, as we have shown, the principle of sufficient reason has ontological validity, then this must also be true of the principle of contradiction; it is not only a logical law of thought, but also the metaphysical law of reality. In other words, the absurd is not only *unthinkable,* but it is also absolutely impossible of *realization.*

21) *The anti-intellectualistic objection raised against the principle of non-contradiction. Solution of the same by means of the concept of potency, which enters into all the proofs for the existence of God.*

This first principle—whether the formula by which it is expressed be affirmative or negative—is not tautological; in fact, there is a certain school of philosophers which denies its truth, and consequently rejects all the proofs which reason offers for the existence of God. The philosophy of this school is based on the theory of "becoming"; it denies the existence of "things," admitting only "actions"; it defines the real, not as that which is (a certain determined nature), but as that which becomes and changes incessantly. Bergson writes in his book on *Creative Evolution,* p. 270: "There are no things, there are only acts; things and states are merely modes of thinking, which our mind derives from the idea of becoming." Accordingly, this philosopher refuses to see a real distinction between "a glass of water, water, sugar, and the process by which sugar is dissolved in water." *{Ibid.,* pp. 10 and 366). This amounts to saying that everything is what it is, and what it is not; hence the square is a square and no square, since it constantly changes and, therefore, has no proper nature. Likewise, man is rational and irrational, and not having any proper nature of his own, it was possible for him to have evolved from pure animality by the process of creative evolution. Everything is in everything.

Le Roy reduces all his objections to the traditional proofs for the existence of God to this: that they all depend upon the *postulate of morcellation.* "The distinctions between mover and moved," he says, "between movement and the object moved, between the affirmation of the primacy of the act over the potency, rest on the same postulate of common thought. . . . But of what value are these idols of the practical imagination? Why not simply identify being with becoming? Since all things are movement, there is need to ask ourselves what causes them to be in movement." 40 Such a view leads one to conclude that God,

40 *"Comment se pose le Problème de Dieu,"* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* March, 1907.

far from being "He who is," in every respect identical with Himself, is but "a reality in the making, ... a continuous projection," [41] that He is "an infinite in becoming." [42] He is no longer conceived as apart from the world which is projected from Him, but He is the process of becoming, is always becoming, yet will never be.

Those who profess this Pantheistic philosophy are fully aware that the stand which they take is the result of denying the objective validity of the principle of identity or non-contradiction. According to Le Roy, "the principle of non-contradiction is not as universal and necessary as has been believed; its application is limited; it is restricted and circumscribed in meaning. Being the supreme law of speech, but not of thought in general, its influence extends merely to whât is static, morcellated, immobile, in a word, to the things endowed with *identity.* But just as there is identity in the world, so also there is contradiction. Such are those fugitive fluxes, as becoming, duration, life, which of themselves are not of the rational order, and which speech transforms so as to incorporate them into contradictory schemata." [43] Our intellect *reifies* (objectivâtes) the universal flux for the needs of speech and of practical life, and in that way pretends to submit all that is real to the principle of identity.

The moral consequences of this doctrine have been stated by Jean Weber of the Bergsonian school. It ends in unmorality of conduct; there is no more a distinction *between good and evil* than there is between being and not-being. "Morality, in planting itself on a terrain from which invention grows in all its vigour, immediately and full of life; in manifesting itself as the most insolent encroachment of the realm of the intellect upon spontaneity, was fated to encounter the continual contradictions of

41 Bergson, *Evolution Créatrice,* p. 270.
42 Le Roy, *Rev. de Met. et de Morale,* July, 1907, p. 512.
43 Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, 1905, pp. 200-204.

that undeniable reality of dynamism and creation which is our activity. . . . Confronted with these morals of ideas, we outline morality, or, more correctly, the unmorality of the act. . . . We call 'good' whatever has triumphed. Success, provided it is fierce and implacable, provided the vanquished are completely defeated, destroyed, abolished beyond hope—success justifies everything. . . . The man of genius is profoundly immoral, but for anyone to be immoral is not the proper thing. . . . 'Duty' is nowhere in particular, and yet it is everywhere, for all actions possess absolute value. The repentant sinner deserves all the anguish of his contrite soul, because he was not strong enough to transgress the law, and unworthy to be a sinner." [44] Hence there is no longer any difference between Ravachol and a Christian martyr. This conclusion of "the philosophy of becoming" was clearly condemned in the first proposition of the Syllabus of Pius IX.[45]

This denial of the objective validity of the principle of identity is of Sensualist origin; it originated in the theory of the perpetual movement of sensible appearances, and especially in the facts of consciousness.[46] Heraclitus said: "No one goes twice into the same river, . . . where everything is flowing, proceeding on its course, without ever stopping." We can never say of anything which changes that "it is such and such a thing," because at the very moment when we say so, it is something else. In matter of fact, nothing is, everything is becoming. This argument has been thrown into logical form by saying that *"Ex ente non fit ens, quia jam est ens," i. e.,* nothing can come from being, since what-

Revue de Mit. et Morale, 1894, PP· 549~56o.

45 "God is the same as nature, and therefore subject to change. God actually becomes *in man and in the world;* all things are God and have the same divine substance; God is absolutely identical with the world, and hence there is no difference between spirit and matter, necessity and liberty, truth and falsehood, good and evil, justice and injustice." (Denz., n. 1701).

18 Bergson, *Evolution Créative,* pp. 2 ff.

ever is, already exists, and what is becoming, before becoming does not exist; on the other hand, *"Ex nihilo nihil fit"* (nothing can cqme from nothing) ; if at any given moment nothing exists, then nothing ever will come into existence. From these two principles Parmenides concluded that becoming is an illusion, and the only thing he was willing to affirm was the principle of identity that: "Being is, non-being is not, and we can never escape from this thought." From these same principles Heraclitus concluded that being and non-being are mere abstractions of the mind, and "becoming" is the only reality, a mobile identity of contraries. This explains the universal "contradiction" which is found in all things.47

Aristotle devotes to the defence of the principle of contradiction Book IV of his *Metaphysics,* from the third chapter to the end of the fourth. "It is not possible," he writes, "for anyone ever to think that the same thing exists and does not exist. Heraclitus, according to some, is of a different opinion, but a man need not believe all that he says. This would be an affirmation which would deny itself. . . . (c. 3). It would mean to deny language and then to admit that we can speak (c. 4) ; all words would be synonymous, and all beings would be reduced to one single being; a galley, a wall, a man would all be one and the same thing (c. 4). The admission of a becoming without a something which is becoming, completely destroys substance and forces one to assert that everything is accident, to admit a process of becoming without a subject which becomes (c. 4). The reason why these philosophers [of the school of Heraclitus] held such an opinion is, that they regarded only objects of sense perception as constituting *being,* . . . and seeing that all sensible nature is in perpetual flux, . . . certain ones amongst them, such as Cratylus,

47 See Aristotle, *Phys.,* Bk. I, c. 8; Commentary of St. Thomas, Leet. 16, and *Metaphys.,* Bk. IV (III), cc. 3, 4, and 5.

believed that we must affirm nothing. Cratylus deemed a thovement of the finger to be a sufficient answer (c. 5)." 48

We cannot deny, therefore, as Heraclitus did, the principle of non-contradiction. It remains for us to refute the objection derived from the idea of movement. Aristotle met this objection by introducing the notion of *potency,* as an intermediary between actual being and pure nothingness. *{Phys.,* Bk. I, c. viii; *Met.,* Bk. IX).49 He says that it must be conceded that whatever becomes, does not come from actual being *{ex ente non fit ens),* and that nothing cannot come from nothing *{ex nihilo nihil fit).* And yet, whatever Parmenides may say, there is such a thing as *becoming.* To admit this, must we, like Heraclitus, deny being, the principle of all intelligibility, and say that *becoming* has its reason within itself? By no means; for *becoming* marks the transition from *undetermined being* to determined being. We have examples of this in the difference between one's capacity for ac-

48 Aristotle gives eight principal reasons for defending the necessity and real validity of the principle of contradiction. They are briefly: (1) to deny this necessity and this validity would be to deprive words of their fixed meaning and to render speech useless; (2) all idea of the reality of an essence, or thing or substance as such, would have to be abandoned; there would be only a becoming without anything which is on the way of becoming; it would be like saying that there can be a flux without a fluid, a flight without a bird, a dream without a dreamer; (3) there would no longer be any *distinction between things,* between a galley, a wall, and a man; (4) it would mean the *destruction of all truth,* for truth follows being; (5) it would *destroy all thought, even all opinion:* for its very affirmation would be a negation. It would not be an opinion which Heraclitus had when he affirmed that contradictories are true at the same time; (6) it would mean the *destruction of all desire* and all hatred; there would be only absolute indifference, for there would be no distinction between good and evil; there would be no reason why we should act; (7) it would no longer be possible to distinguish degrees of error; everything would be equally false and true at the same time; (8) it would put an end to the *very notion of becoming;* for there would be no distinction between the beginning and the end of a movement; the first would already be the second, and any transition from one state to another would be impossible. Moreover "becoming" could not be explained by any of the four causes. There would be no subject of becoming; the process would be without any efficient or final cause, and without specification, and it would be both attraction and repulsion, concretion as well as fusion.

48 See F. Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote,* Vol. I, pp. 391-394.

quiring knowledge and the knowledge acquired, between the embryo and the fully constituted being, between the seed and the plant, etc. Undetermined being is susceptible of receiving a determination, and this susceptibility we call *potency.* This potency, which is not being, cannot pass into actuality, but demands to be reduced to actuality by an active power, which itself must be aroused to action by some previous power, and, in the final analysis, by an active supreme power, which is its own activity, and hence *unmoved, pure actuality,* always *absolutely the same.* In that way *becoming* is explained, and the principle of contradiction remains intact.

Aristotle even goes so far as to claim that his position alone entitles us to affirm the process of becoming, just as it permits us to affirm identity. "This system [of Heraclitus], in which being and not-being are alleged to exist simultaneously, must lead to the admission of perpetual repose rather than of perpetual movement. In fact, there is nothing left which beings may become, since everything is in everything else." (IV *Met.,* c. v). A *becoming* without a "subject" which remains unaltered throughout the process of change, would no longer be a *becoming,* for at each instant there would be both annihilation and creation. Later on we shall see that a *causeless* and *purposeless* process of becoming is no less an impossibility. (See nos. 26 and 27).

Bergson presents the argument of Heraclitus in a new form. "There is more," he says, "in a movement than in the successive positions attributed to the moving object, more in a *becoming* than in the forms passed through in turn, more in the evolution of form than in the forms realized one after another. Philosophy can, therefore, derive terms of the second kind from those of the first, but not vice versa; for it is from the first terms that speculation must take its start. But the intellect reverses the order of the two terms, and on this point ancient philosophy proceeds as the intellect does. It installs itself in the immutable, it posits ideas,

and passes to *becoming* by way of attenuation and diminution." 60 "A perpetual mobility is possible only if it is backed by an eternity of immutability, which it unwinds in a chain that has neither beginning nor end. Such is the last word of Greek philosophy. It has its roots deep down in the soul of pagan antiquity. It would, therefore, be useless to try to deduce it from a simple principle. But if every element derived from poetry, religion, social life, and a rudimentary system of physics and biology be removed from it, if we take away all the light materials that may have been used in the construction of the stately building, a solid framework remains, and this framework marks the main lines of a metaphysic which is, we believe, the natural metaphysic of the human intellect." 51

Bergson's philosophy is of the dynamic order, which is the very opposite of the natural metaphysic of the ancients, for the reason that such a metaphysic is merely the systematization of dissociated objects, and of the morcellation to which the universal flux has been submitted by common opinion, or, in other words, by the practical imagination and by speech. In Bergson's opinion the intellect is made only for considering "inert objects, more especially solids, where our action finds its fulcrum and our industry obtains its tools; our concepts have been formed on the model of solids, our logic is pre-eminently a logic of solids," incapable of representing the real, which is essentially *becoming* and life.82

This argument has remained almost unchanged since the time of Heraclitus, and its Sensualist origin becomes more and more evident as we go along. If solid bodies constitute the sole object of the intellect, how are we to explain the verb *"to be,"* which is the soul of every judgment, and in what way does man differ

60 *Evolution Créatrice,* pp. 341 f.
61 *Ibid.,* p. 354.
62 *Ibid.,* p. i.

from the animal? If the object of the intellect is not the *solid body,* but *being* and all which has a *raison d'être,* the Bergsonian proposition that "there is more in the movement than in the immobile," is true only of immobilities viewed by the senses as actual *becoming.* But it is false, if interpreted in the sense of an absolute principle, because in that case it would imply that "what is as yet merely a *becoming,* is more of a reality than what actually *is."* The senses see in the immobile object something which is *at rest;* the intellect, *something which is,* in opposition to something which is *becoming,* just as the immutable is that which it is and cannot be other than what it is. Bergsonian Sensualism confuses immutability, which transcends all movement, with something which is inferior to it; namely, the terminus *ad quern* with the terminus *a quo, actuality* with *potency.* In this way it lowers the immobile life of the intellect, which contemplates the highest eternal laws, to the level of the inertia of inanimate solids. From this point of view, the vegetative life of the stomach is superior to the immobile life of the intellect; time is superior to eternity, for it is life, whereas eternity is death.

Boutroux answers Spencer by remarking that "evolutionism is the truth envisaged from the point of view of the *senses,* but as the *intellect* considers things, it remains true that the imperfect does not exist and does not determine itself except by reason of the more perfect. . . . Moreover, the intellect persistently proclaims with Aristotle that everything has a reason, and the first principle must be the ultimate reason of things. Now, to explain means to determine, and the ultimate reason for the existence of things must be sought in the completely determined being."[63] "This is the last word of Greek philosophy," but it is not, as Bergson says, "connected by invisible threads with all the fibres of the ancient soul" and with what constitutes the basis of the human intellect. It is not true to say that we cannot "deduce it from a simple

63 See *Etudes d'Histoire de la Philosophie,* p. 202.

principle." It is connected with the intellect by the supreme law of thought and of reality—the principle of identity, implied in the very first of all ideas, which is that of *being.* It is connected with the intellect, not by a utilitarian division of the sensible content, imposed by the conventional modes of practical life and speech; but, if we wish to avoid an absurd conclusion, it rests of necessity upon the principle of the morcellation of intelligible being.

22) *Hegel's objection {absolute intellectualism) to the principle of identity.*

The anti-intellectualism of Heraclitus, repeated at the present day by Bergson, is at the opposite pole of the absolute intellectualism of Hegel, which also denies the objective validity of the principle of identity. While the Sensualist philosophy of *becoming* reduces the rational to experimental reality, to the fact of consciousness, what must be to what actually is, right to the *fait accompli,* morality to success, necessity to a meaningless and lawless liberty, to a sort of blind spontaneity resembling the "unconscious" of Schopenhauer; the intellectualist philosophy of *becoming,* on the contrary, restores experimental reality to the rational order, that which is to that which ought to be, the *fait accompli* to right, success to morality, liberty to necessity. Thus Bergsonism appears like a reversed Hegelianism.

Hegel's Pantheism was the result of his denial, from an intellectualist point of view, of the principle of non-contradiction, in the very name of the idea of being.[54] His argumentation, as set

[54] Hegel proposes to refute the Pantheism of Schelling, in which the relatively transcendental absolute becomes the world by a sort of evolution in the descending order, which reminds one of the emanation theory of the Alexandrian school. According to Hegel, the transition from this unique Absolute to the multiplicity of things cannot be logically explained. If this Absolute is perfect in itself, and incapable of further perfection, how could the world proceed from it? The transition from the one to many would be irrational, without reason. Knowledge, on the contrary, presupposes that everything which is real is rational and logical. In

forth in his *Logi^* (French translation by A. Vera, 2nd ed., § 85, Bk. I, pp. 393-412), is correctly summed up by the historian Weber in the following words: "Being is the most universal of all notions, but for this very reason it is also the poorest and the most negative of notions. To be white or black, to have extension, to be good, means to be something; but to be without any determination, is to be nothing, is simply not to be. *Pure and simple being is, therefore, equivalent to not-being.* It is at one and the same time itself and its contrary. If it were merely itself, it would remain immobile and sterile; if it were mere nothingness, it would be synonymous with zero, and in this case also completely powerless and infecund. It is because it is the *one and the other* that it *becomes* something, another thing, everything. The contradiction contained in the notion of being resolves itself into *becoming,* development. To *become* is at the same time *to be* and *not to be* (that which will be). The two contraries which engender it, namely, being and non-being, are rediscovered, blended and reconciled in *becoming.* The result is a new contradiction,

fact, the real is nothing else but the rational. Hegel is thus led to admit *the real idea of being* as the principle of all knowledge and of all reality. This idea, by an internal necessity, and in accordance with a logic superior to that of the principle of contradiction, gradually determines itself into genera, species, and individuals, and by this ascending scale of evolution establishes the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, until finally, on the appearance of man, it takes cognizance of its own self. With the evolution of human thought, both individual and collective, this consciousness of the absolute passes from a confused to a distinct knowledge, until there appears idealistic evolutionism, the philosophy of the *creative idea,* superior to all forms of art, religion, and philosophy. The point of departure of this philosophy is the identification of the idea of being with the reality of being in general—an identification which is contrary to the testimony of conscience and to the principle of contradiction. In the course of its evolution, it is a constant violation of the principle of contradiction and of the principle of causality, since the less is the cause of the greater; it also runs contrary to the principle of mutation, for the change is without a subject which changes, and to the principle of finality, for there is no orderly connection between the evolution of the lower forms of life and the higher; this passive ordination presupposes an active ordination. But, according to this doctrine, there is no original and intelligent designer.

which will resolve itself into a new synthesis, and thus the process will continue until the absolute idea is reached." 55

To perceive the sophism contained in this argument, we need only cast it into syllogistic form: Pure being is pure indétermination. But pure indetermination is pure non-being. Therefore, pure being is pure non-being. The middle term, "pure indétermination," is used in two different senses. In the major it means the negation of all determination, generic, specific, or individual, but not the negation of (ideal or real) being, which transcends the generic determinations of which it is susceptible. In the minor, on the other hand, pure indetermination is not only the negation of all generic, specific, and individual determination, but also implies the negation of any further determination of which being is capable. Therefore, the argument amounts to this: that pure being is undetermined being; but undetermined being is pure non-being. The minor is evidently false.58

Besides, there is no apparent reason why *becoming* should emerge from this realized contradiction, this identification of contradictories. On the contrary, we must hold with Aristotle that "to maintain that being and non-being are identical, is to admit permanent repose rather than perpetual motion. There is in fact nothing into which beings can transform themselves, because *"everything includes everything."* (IV *Met.,* c. v).

Finally, this absolute intellectualism of Hegel is no less destructive of all knowledge than is the anti-intellectualism of Heraclitus and Bergson. All reasoning presupposes that every idea employed in the process represents a reality, the nature of which remains *the same;* but for Hegel, the principle of identity is merely a law of inferior logic, of the mind working with abstractions, and not a law of superior logic, of reason and reality. "From this it follows," as Aristotle remarked (IV *Met.,* c. iv), "that one can with

05 Cfr. also G. Noel, *La Logique de Hegel,* Paris, 1897, pp. 23-52 and 135-159.
68 Sec Zigliara, *Summa Philosophica,* Vol. I, *Critica,* pp. 247-252.

equal right affirm or deny everything of all things, that all men tell the truth and that all lie, and that each one admits that he is a liar."

For the rest, Hegel himself acknowledges "that if it is true to say that *being* and *non-being* are one and the same, it is also true to say that they differ, and that the one is not the other." *(Logip,* Bk. I, p. 404). It follows from this that, according to Hegel, nothing can be affirmed and everything can be affirmed. If this attitude does not destroy all science, it cannot at least be said to have more than a relative value, and hence to possess nothing more than the name of science.

We may rightly conclude, therefore, that the objections raised against the principle of contradiction in no way affect its validity. Those of Hegel as well as those of Heraclitus and of Bergson are mere paralogisms. These philosophers admit that the principle of contradiction is a law of the reasoning mind and of speech, and it must also be accepted as the law of being. In other words, the *absurd* is not only *unthinkable,* but also impossible of *realization,* because no power, however great, can make it real. For the mind, this principle is the first of all evident certainties; its ontological validity is based on that of the notion of being, which has occupied us through so many pages. The objections just examined are powerless to weaken or depreciate the soundness of this principle in any way.

Renouvier, as various philosophers before him, in his *Dilemmes de la Métaphysique Pure,* p. 2, casts doubt upon the objectivity of the principle of contradiction. In reference to this it suffices to say, with Evellin *(Congrès de Métaphysique,* Paris, 1900, p. 175), that "if the law of non-contradiction were merely a law of thought, but not of reality, *being* would lose precisely that which constitutes it what it is—its identity with itself, and consequently, *being* as such would be non-existent. Everything would disappear in an intangible flux. . . . The principle of identity is not

only an essential requisite of thought, but it also constitutes nature, having thoroughly emancipated it from the tyranny of the phenomenon." In fact, as we shall see further on, the principle of substance is merely a determination of the principle of identity. The principles of sufficient reason and of causality can also be traced back to this principle of identity, by showing the absurdity of the opposite contention; which means that they, too, have ontological value, *i. e.,* are laws of being.

From the preceding discussion it is evident that, if the principle of identity and of non-contradiction had no objective value, evolutionistic Pantheism would be victorious and *"becoming"* would be the fundamental reality. If, on the contrary, the absolute universality and objectivity of this principle are established, the fundamental reality is necessarily *pure identity,* or self-subsistent Being *{ipsum esse subsistens),* pure being, pure actuality, pure perfection, a transcendent reality essentially distinct from the world, which is composite and subject to change.

Hegelianism, Heraclitism, and Bergsonism thus, by their avowed contradiction, which is an essential feature of their systems, furnish a proof *per absurdum* for the existence and transcendental nature of God.

23) *Substance is the determining principle of identity. What place it holds in the demonstration of the existence of God.*

It is easy to see that the principle of substance, denied by the philosophy of *becoming,* is nothing but a determination of the principle of identity. It is important to recall this truth here, because the proofs for the existence of God presuppose the existence of substances, and of substances distinct from one another. In an article entitled *"La Dernière Idole,"* which appeared in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* of July, 1902, M. Hebert wrote: "The principle of causality, bringing us back to a first extrinsic cause in accordance with the axiom that *'quidquid movetur, ab*

alio movetur' [whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another], derives its apparent lucidity from a spatial image which has been illicitly introduced into a metaphysical problem. It is based on the supposition that the movers and those moved are distinct substances, which Pantheism denies." We have already had occasion to note that this same objection was developed by Le Roy in discussing the postulate of morcellation. In his view, as in Bergson's, substance is "a position in space," resulting from the advantageous morcellation of the continuous in sense perception. From the empirical point of view, or as far as the senses are concerned, it is difficult to see how it could be defined otherwise. But from the intellectual point of view, substance is conceived as a fundamental reality belonging to a different order than quantity and sensible qualities. Being present entirely in the whole and in every part of it, it gives to the object its unity. It cannot be perceived as such by the senses, but only by the intellect. (St. Thomas, Illa, q. 76, a. 7). Nevertheless, it is called a *sensibile per accidens* (an accidentally sensible object) because the senses recognize it accidentally as the subject of phenomena concerning which they have a direct knowledge. As a matter of fact, the sense of sight perceives, not color in general, but *that which is colored,* a colored object perceived precisely as colored, whereas the intellect, upon the simple presentation of a sensible object, perceives it as a substance without any investigation. "What is immediately apprehended by the intellect, when confronted with the object of sense perception, is called *sensibile per accidens* (accidentally sensible)." (Aristotle, *De Anima,* Bk. II; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 13). As soon as the dominant one of the internal sense faculties has reunited the data presented by each of the external senses, therefore, the substance is thus grasped by the intellect.

In its relation to the intellect, substance is but a primary determination of being, necessary for the purpose of rendering in-

telligible, in the role of being, a group of phenomena which presents itself as autonomous. On the first presentation of any sensible object whatever, such as, *e. g.,* the swaddling-clothes in which an infant is wrapped, whilst the sense of sight perceives the color of this object, that of touch its shape and resistance, the intellect acquires a confused knowledge of its *being*—that the object is "something which is." This first known object of the intellect becomes more clearly defined as *something which is one and permanent* (a substance), after the intellect has noted the multiplicity of its phenomena and the changes which they undergo. In fact, it is only by reason of this oneness that the multiple becomes intelligible, just as the permanent or the identical explain the transitory; for one of the formulas of the principle of identity is that "every being is one and the same with itself." To *say of a being that it is a substance, is to assert that it remains one and the same under its multiple and changing phenomena.* The principle of substance, therefore, is simply a determination of the principle of identity, and the idea of substance a determination of the idea of being. In the acquisition of its knowledge the intellect proceeds from the idea of being—in which that of substance is *de facto* implicitly included—to the somewhat confused ideas of the manner of being implied in phenomena, multiplicity, and change. It seeks to render these new ideas intelligible in the light of the idea of being, and comes to recognize the "something which is" as one and a permanent subject, as a *being* in the full sense of the word, as *something which exists in itself or subsists* (a substance). The intellect is now in a position to narrow down the concept of the manner of being implied in the phenomenon, which cannot be defined except in terms of what exists in itself, for it is *ens entis,* "an entity of an entity." Thus, the confused concept of the phenomenon adds to the definiteness of the concept of substance, and is in turn more clearly defined

by it. (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 85, a. 5). Therefore, the morcellation which separates *being* from the phenomenon is not a utilitarian division of the continuous in sense perception, but a division of the intelligible, which, by reason of the principle of identity, is a metaphysical or *a priori* requisite.

From this point of view, the second Kantian antinomy, which concerns corporeal substance, presents no difficulty. The continu* ous is *divisible,* but not *divided* indefinitely; 57 the corporeal and extended substance is not a contradictory collection of unextended indivisible parts, but its unity is assured by a principle superior to that of the spatial order, namely, the substantial form, which *exists as a whole in the object as a whole and in each part of the object,* and which demands such extension—the *least possible*— as a condition for the subsistence of the composite.

As for the numerical distinction of individual substances of the sensible order (a distinction presupposed by certain proofs for the existence of God, but not essential to these proofs), we often have only physical certitude, derived from experience and the laws which experimental science has discovered. But the criterion of the substantial unity of a being is not merely, as Le Roy would have it,®8 its quantitative unity in space, a unity perceptible to the sense of touch, for this sort of unity often presupposes only an accidental union, namely, that of an aggregation of molecules. The true criterion of the substantial unity of a being is *activity,* and "the action which reveals the unity of the whole must be produced by a single part, and not by the association of parts; but the influence of the other parts must also be revealed in this action. A frequently quoted example is that of a mare with a broken cannon bone, having a colt whose cannon bone looks as if it were broken but grown together again." It is by means

57 Aristotle, *Phys.,* Bk. VI.

58 Rev. ‹ie Met. et Mor., July, 1899, p. 383.

of this principle that the individuality of the higher animals is established.[89] When, in reality, we distinguish between two animals, or between an animal and its environment, this is not merely "an arrangement, a simplification convenient to the word and the action." Bergson in his *Creative Evolution* admits that the living body is isolated by nature itself, even though its individuality is not perfect.

As for the substantial distinction between human souls, it is the object of metaphysical certitude and can be scientifically demonstrated. The intellect, which is the basis of freedom, is intrinsically independent of the organism when in operation, and its object is universal being. It presupposes, therefore, a subsistent and simple principle, intrinsically independent of matter and of the world of corporeal beings *(operari sequitur esse, et modus operandi modum essendï).* This subsistent and simple principle, which is conscious and master of itself, must be distinct from similar subsistent principles. St. Thomas proves this in his *Summa Theologica,* la, q. 76, a. 2, saying that "it is absolutely impossible for one intellect to belong to all men; if there were one intellect for all men, it would not be possible to distinguish my intellectual action from yours on the basis of one intelligible object; there would be only one intellectual act." Finally, it follows as an evident conclusion that human souls are distinct from the Absolute, if it is proved that the Absolute cannot harbor within itself either multiplicity or *becoming.*

The principle of sufficient reason, which we are about to consider, will show us clearly that whatever is multiple (composite) and changing, cannot have a sufficient reason for its existence in itself, but in the final analysis this reason must be sought in a being which is pure identity, pure being, pure act, pure perfection. From this point of view, it matters not whether the world

68 De Munnynck, *"L'individualité des animaux supérieurs,"* in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1901, p. 664.

from which we start to prove the existence of God is one single substance, or a number of substances. It is sufficient for our purpose if there be found in it (at least accidental) multiplicity and *becoming.* God cannot be conceived as the substance of the world, for that would mean that Fie is determined and consequently perfected by the multiple and transitory phenomena superadded to Him. He would no longer be identified with His being as A is A, be pure being or pure act.

24) *The principle of sufficient reason is the immediate basis of the proofs for the existence of God. By the appeal to the impossible it resolves itself into the principle of identity. In this sense, it is an analytical principle.*

The principle of sufficient reason, on which the proofs for the existence of God are based, is not, like the principle of substance, a simple determination of the principle of identity, but resolves itself into this principle by an appeal to the impossible. The principle of sufficient reason may be expressed by the following formula: "Everything which is, has a sufficient reason for existing," or, "Every being has a sufficient reason;" consequently, "everything is intelligible." This principle is self-evident, and though it cannot be directly demonstrated, it can be indirectly demonstrated by the indirect method of proof known as *reductio ad absurdum.* The direct demonstration furnishes, by means of a middle term, *intrinsic* evidence of a proposition not immediately evident, or not self-evident. The demonstration by the method of *reductio ad absurdum* of an immediately evident principle cannot make this principle *intrinsically* evident for us, but merely proves that he who denies this principle must also deny the principle of contradiction, and that he who doubts it must also doubt the principle of contradiction. It is a unanimously accepted doctrine in Scholastic philosophy, that metaphysics explains and defends

the first principles by the method of *reductio ad impossibile,* referring them to the principle of identity, which is immediately implied in the first of all ideas, that of being.[80]

"In principles which are knowable in themselves," writes St. Thomas, "there is found a certain order, so that some of them are plainly included in others; just as all principles are reduced to this one as to their first: that it is impossible to affirm and deny at the same time, as is evident from what the Philosopher says in the Fourth Book of his *Metaphysics,* text. 9." (IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 7).

Let us explain in what this *reductio ad absurdum* consists. First of all, we must show what is the exact meaning of the formula as an expression of the principle: "Everything which is, has its reason for being." The reason for being is twofold: intrinsic or extrinsic. When we speak of the *intrinsic* sufficient reason of anything we mean that which constitutes it to be of such and such a nature, endowed with certain properties and none other. Thus, there must be something in a square which makes it to be what it is, a square with certain properties, rather than a circle with certain other properties. If it were only a question of the intrinsic sufficient reason, this principle would merely be a determination of the principle of identity, and from this point of view, envisage substance as essence. To deny that every being has in itself that by which it is as it is, when it is such of itself and by what properly constitutes it as such, would evidently be tantamount to denying the principle of

60 Cfr. Book IV of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* and the Commentary of St. Thomas, Lcct. 6. Also the *Sumina Theol.,* la, Ilae, q. 94, a. 2; Suarez, *Disp. Met.,* disp. Ill, sect. 3, no. 9; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Phil.,* q. 25, a. 2; Goudin, ed. i860, IV, p. 255; Kleutgen, *Phil. Schoi.,* nos. 293, 294; Zigliara, *Ontol.,* p. 235; *De la Lumière Intellectuelle,* t. Ill, p. 255; Delmas, *Ontol.,* p. 642. This point has been fully discussed by the present writer in the *Revue Thomiste,* Sept., 1918, in an article entitled, *"Comment le principe de raison d'être se rattache au principe d'identité, d'après St. Thomas,"* reproduced in *Le Sens Commun, la Philosophie de l'Ètre et les Formules Dogmatiques* (p. 208).

identity, to deny that red is red in itself and that a square has in it something which constitutes it as such with certain properties, rather than a circle with certain other properties.

But the sufficient reason can also be extrinsic. Thus we say that the properties of a thing have their sufficient reason in the nature from which they are derived, and in the specific difference from which they can be deduced, and which gives them their intelligibility. The investigation of the nature of a triangle, for instance, reveals its properties, and in the deliberative capacity of the reason we detect the presence of freedom. Again, we say that the sufficient reason for the existence of a being which does not exist of itself, must be found in another being which exists of itself. This extrinsic sufficient reason of a contingent being is called its efficient cause; it is its realizing or actualizing *raison d'être, i. e.,* that which makes it a reality or an actuality. Finally, we say that a means which is not willed for its own sake, but in view of an end, has its extrinsic sufficient reason in that end. Thus we see that the extrinsic sufficient reason may be either the efficient or the final cause. Without going into details, we shall apply the term *cause* in its generic sense to this principle, not considering, for the present, the question of efficiency.

If, therefore, we wish to express concisely the formula of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the principle of sufficient reason, we may say that "Every being has a sufficient reason, either in itself or in some other being, for being what it is; in itself, if what constitutes it as such belongs to it by its very nature; in another, if what is attributed to it does not belong to it by its very nature."

As we have already seen, the first part of this formula, which concerns the intrinsic sufficient reason, is simply a determination of the principle of identity. It is the second part which, by the method of *reductio ad impossibile,* can be referred back

to the supreme principle. In other words, it is not only *unintelligible,* as the followers of Kant claim, but also contradictory, to say that a being which has not in itself a sufficient reason for what it is, cannot be said to have its *raison d'etre* in another. That such is the case can easily be proved. A. Spir's *Pensée et Réalité*[61] will help us to present this argument in a convincing form.

The principle of identity may be stated as follows: "Every being is by itself constituted in its own specific nature." Thus A is A; what is red, is red by its very nature; the square is by its very nature a square. From this we derive the negative formula, which is the principle of non-contradiction: "One and the same being cannot be and not be what it is;" it cannot, for instance, be round and not-round. A third formula resulting from this, which may be called the principle of contraries or disparities, is: "One and the same being cannot be at the same time and in the same sense determined in two different ways;" it cannot, for instance, be round and square, for what is square, as such, is the opposite of what is round, and by its very nature is not-round. This prepares us for a fourth formula: If it is a contradiction to say that "the square is round," it is no contradiction to say that "the square is red," since the attribute in this case is of a different order. In a square it is the *form* that we are considering, but in a red object it is the *color.* The square can be red without ceasing to be a square. But there is a contradiction in terms if we say that "the square of itself, and as such, that is to say, by what determines it in its own nature, is red;" for what determines a square to be a square is something *different* than what determines an object to be red. It cannot be said that it belongs to the essence of a square to be red. Hence the fourth formula may also be stated as follows: "That which is predicated of a being, without

61 Translated from the German by M. Pcnjon, Paris, 1896, pp. 146 and 203.

properly belonging to it, as constituting it in its species, does not have its *raison d'être* in itself." This formula, a direct deduction from the principle of identity, may also be expressed in this way: "Elements which are different *in themselves,* do not *of themselves* coalesce to form some sort of unity, and cannot *of themselves* be *united* or mutually predicated."

Finally, the extrinsic principle of sufficient reason in addition to this affirms that "what is predicated of a being, though not belonging to it as properly constituting it in its species, has of necessity its sufficient reason in something external to it." St. Thomas puts it thus: *"Omne quod alicui convenit non secundum quod ipsum est*[62], *per aliquam causam ei convenit, nam quod causam non habet primum et immediatum est"* "whatever a thing may fittingly have, according to its nature, accrues to this thing from an extrinsic cause, for what has no cause, is primary and immediate." (C. G., II, ch. 15 c. 2). In another of his works he expresses the same thought more briefly by remarking that "things in themselves different cannot unite, unless something causes them to unite" (1a, q. 3, a. 7).

This principle enunciates a new truth, not included in the fourth formula, for it affirms a *relation of dependence, the presence of an external cause,* which cannot be deduced from the principle of identity by a direct demonstration, but is in itself immediately evident; however, it can be referred to the principle of identity by an indirect demonstration, or, in other words, by the method of *reductio ad absurdum.*

It has often been disputed whether it is possible to invoke this particular method of proof against one who would deny the extrinsic principle of sufficient reason.[63] All reductions so

62 This *"secundum quod ipsum est"* is the equivalent of Aristotle's *καθ' αυτό καὶ ἡ αυτό,* which occurs in his *Analytica Post.,* Bk. I, c. 4.

es M. J. Laminnc, in the *Revue Néo-scolastique de Philosophie* (Louvain, Nov., 1912) examines this *reductio ad absurdum* method, which has been fully explained by the present author in another of his works, entitled: *Le Sens Commun et*

far proposed would seem to imply a begging of the question. Hence it is contended that the negation of the principle of sufficient reason is *unintelligible,* but not *absurd.* In other words, it is unintelligible, but it is not absurd, that the contingent should be uncaused. If it were uncaused, it would exist without a sufficient reason; for it could not be explained by anything intrinsic or extrinsic to it.

Those who reason in this manner depart from the principles of traditional philosophy and can be refuted by the very fact that several of their own number admit the absolute necessity of the principle of sufficient reason or causality. That something should be absolutely necessary and yet not exist, is an absolute impossibility. Now, the metaphysical principle of sufficient reason is not simply a necessity of the hypothetical order, such as the laws of physics, but it is also an absolute necessity. Therefore, its denial involves an absolute impossibility, or an absurdity, for the absurd is that which is absolutely impossible. In other words, all those who are at variance with us on this point must concede, as Hume and radical Empiricism do, that, absolutely speaking, a contingent being can be uncaused, which is the same as denying the *absolute necessity* of the principles of sufficient reason and of causality, which in this case are nothing more than empirical laws endowed with a purely hypothetical necessity. And just as God can miraculously raise the dead to life and conserve an accident in existence apart from its substance, so also He could by His absolute power have created

la Philosophie de l'être, p. 230. The conclusion that Laminne came to was this: "To deny that the contingent being is conditioned or relative, is to affirm that it is non-conditioned, non-relative, in a word, that it is absolute, and that we should have to say that what is, though not self-caused, is self-caused." "Again it must be observed," remarks Laminne, "that this reasoning holds good only on the supposition that there must be a sufficient reason for everything which exists; otherwise, to deny that a contingent being is conditioned, would be to affirm its absolute existence, in the sense that it does not depend upon another, but not in this sense that it has the reason for its existence in itself, in other words, that it exists *per se."*

a world in which there would have been effects without causes, an absolute beginning of things, uncaused beings springing from nothing. These absolute beginnings would be incomprehensible mysteries, but they would no more involve a contradiction than the Divine Trinity and the Incarnation. These stringent deductions will not be accepted by any one who wishes to conform to the general principles of traditional philosophy.

In the second place our answer to those who deny the absolute necessity of the principle of sufficient reason must be that the *reductio ad absurdum* method of proof, rejected by them, can be established without begging the question, in the following manner:

To deny the principle of sufficient reason is to affirm that a *contingent* being which exists, though not by itself, can be *uncaused or unconditioned.* Now, what is uncaused or unconditioned exists by itself. Therefore, an uncaused contingent being would at the same time exist by itself and not by itself—which is absurd. This is precisely what St. Thomas means when he says: "Whatever it is proper for a thing to have, but not from its nature, accrues to it from an extrinsic cause; for what has no cause, is first and immediate." (C. *Gentes,* Bk. II, ch. 15, §2). What is uncaused must by itself and immediately be existence itself. If the unconditioned were not existence itself, there could be no possible connection between it and existence, and it could not be distinguished from nothing. An absolute beginning, a being originating from nothing without any cause, is, therefore, an absurdity, since it would be both contingent, that is to say, *not caused by itself,* and at the same time uncaused, unconditioned, non-relative, that is to say, absolute or caused *by itself.* Its existence would be its own *a se* and not *a se.* Therefore, between unconditioned or uncaused contingency there is a contradiction.

Against this argument Hume objected that an uncaused contingent being is only *negatively a se,* that is to say, not caused

by another, but not *positively,* because it has neither within nor outside itself a sufficient reason for its existence.®4

In answer to this objection we say that what is neither *positively its own reason* for existence nor derives this reason *from something else,* is not only unintelligible, but also absurd and impossible, and cannot be distinguished from nothingness. In fact, intelligibility, like possibility, cannot be conceived except in relation to *being.* That is possible which is capable of existing, and that is intelligible which has reference to being, the primary object of the intellect. Consequently, what can in no way refer to being is absolutely unintelligible; likewise, what in itself excludes the idea of existence as something repugnant to its nature, what is not susceptible of existence, is absolutely impossible. Hence it follows, with regard to actual existence, that a *thing cannot actually exist unless it has an actual relation to existence.* Now, an uncaused contingent being could in no way be said *actually to be related* to *existence.* In fact, according to the previous hypothesis, it is not caused either *by itself or by something else,* and consequently cannot be said either of itself or by reason of something else to be actually related to existence. But a relation without any foundation is an impossibility.

Yet this answer does not fully solve the difficulty, for we may say that this actual relation to existence would be indeed without a foundation, that is to say, without any *raison d'etre,* and therefore unintelligible, but not absurd. The answer to the preceding objection is simply a begging of the question, because it presupposes the principle of sufficient reason, which it claims to defend by a *reductio ad absurdum.*

In reply we may say that this relation without a foundation is unintelligible only for the reason that it is in no possible way related to being; it is *beyond the sphere of being and of intelligibility,* just like mere nothing, and consequently, is not only

M This same objection was proposed by Laminae; see footnote to pp. 185 f.

unintelligible, but also absurd and impossible. To make this point still clearer, we must consider that this relation without a foundation would be a relation denoting an *agreement* between actual existence and uncaused contingent being. Now, a relation which denotes an agreement necessarily presupposes two terms which have some element in common, by which the one refers to the other; but in this case actual existence and uncaused contingent being have nothing in common by which they could be referred to each other, since the very definition of uncaused contingent being implies that which exists neither by itself nor by reason of anything else, and has, therefore, nothing by reason of which it could be said to exist. This relation of agreement consequently is not only unintelligible, but also absurd, since it would be a relation of agreement between terms which are in no way related to each other, and have nothing in common which might constitute a basis of agreement.

Hegel perceived this truth clearly when he admitted that a *becoming* which is its own sufficient reason involves a contradiction.

In a word, the uncaused contingent being either is without any sufficient reason for its existence, in which case it is and is not distinguished from nothing; or else it is its own sufficient reason, and then it is and is not distinct from self-existent Being.

Of course, this indirect demonstration does not pretend to give the intrinsic evidence of the principle of sufficient reason —which principle is immediately self-evident and therefore needs no proof. But it does show that the denial of the necessity of this principle is not only unintelligible and disastrous, as Kant maintains, but also *contradictory*. To deny this principle means to deny the principle of contradiction; and to doubt it means to doubt the principle of contradiction. In this sense we say that the principle of sufficient reason is analytical. For a judg-

ment to be analytical, it is not necessary that there should be *logical* identity between the subject and the predicate, for in that case the judgment would be purely tautological and convey no knowledge whatever to the mind. In every affirmative judgment, even in the principle of identity, there is real identity between subject and predicate, though they differ logically. A judgment is analytical and *a priori* or synthetical and *a posteriori,* according as this real identity appears from a mere analysis of the notions implied in the subject and the predicate, or is acquired by observation of existing things. In the present case the analysis of the terms reveals to us that a real identity underlies the logical difference between subject and predicate, which cannot be denied without absurdity.

However, the principle of sufficient reason is not analytical on the same grounds as the principle of identity. In fact, the predicate of this latter principle is included in the notion of the subject, as the elements of a definition are included in the defined subject; whereas in the case of the (extrinsic) principle of sufficient reason, the predicate agrees with the subject merely as an immediate property agrees with the essence from which it derives. Aristotle distinguishes these two different modes of necessary attribution. *(Analytica Post.,* Bk. I, ch. iv; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. io). In the principle of identity we affirm that "every being has its own proper essence," by which it is defined; thus a man is a man, a lion is a lion, what is necessary is necessary, and cannot as well not be, the contingent is the contingent, and can as well not be. We are here concerned with definitions which, as the Scholastics say, belong to the *first mode of per se predication (in primo modo dicendi per se)* as explained by Aristotle in the above-quoted passage. The principle of sufficient reason, on the contrary, affirms of a contingent being not that which defines it, but a property which immediately follows from its nature, and this is known as the

second mode of per se predication (in secundo modo dicendi per se). "Though the relation to its cause," says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 44, ad 1), "is not part of the definition of the thing caused, it follows from its nature; from the fact that a thing has being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another being. Hence such a being cannot exist without being caused, just as a man cannot be a man without having the faculty of laughing," which is one of the properties of human nature. The contingent being can and must be defined without reference to its relation of dependence upon some other being. Contingent being is in fact defined as that which can be and just as well not be. But we cannot deny that a contingent being is related to some other being upon which it depends, without at the same time denying its very contingency. This point has been established by our method of proof showing that such a view leads to an absurdity or impossibility. To deny to such a being this relation of dependence is to identify it either with self-existent Being or with nothing.

The chief difficulty presented by the principle of sufficient reason is, how to reconcile it with (divine or human) liberty. For either there is a sufficient reason which determines the free act as such, and then it is no longer free, or else it has no determining cause, and tlien its beginning is absolute, which implies a contradiction. We shall discuss this problem later.

25) *The principle of efficient causality is the immediate basis of the proofs for the existence of God. The idea of efficient cause and its ontological validity. Efficient causality, defined in terms of actual being, transcends the order of phenomena and is an accidentally sensible, but essentially intelligible, entity.*

From the principle of sufficient reason are derived the principle of efficient causality, properly so called, of finality, and of

induction. The sufficient reason of a thing is more general in scope than its cause. The cause is that upon which something depends for its existence;[65] in other words, it is the sufficient reason for the existence of its effect, and especially is this the case with the efficient cause, in that it *realizes,* or, more correctly, actualizes the effect; but not every sufficient reason is a cause; thus, the specific difference is the reason for the properties of a being, but not their cause.

We shall not investigate, in order to refute the Empirics, whether this idea of the efficient cause comes to us from external experience (resistance offered by material things with which we come in contact), or whether it is the result of internal experience (a consciousness of the effort which we exert upon these external objects). It would also be futile to inquire, concerning the knowledge acquired by sense perception, such as found in animals, whether the effort is merely *followed* by a displacement of an external mobile, or whether it produces or realizes this displacement. Hume and all his followers affirm that the senses tell us nothing about the effects of *causality,* but merely that there is a succession of events. It is certain that causality cannot be perceived by the senses in the same way as color or sound; not being *directly sensible (sensibile per se)* it is, like *substance,* a reality of the intelligible order *per se* (a noumenon); but it can truly be said to be *accidentally sensible (sensibile per accidens')* "because the intellect immediately perceives it when confronted with the object of sense perception." *(De Anitna,* Bk. II; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 13). The sensitive faculty perceives the object which is the cause, but not precisely *qua* cause. In like manner the intellect perceives

65 All reality and *becoming* depend for their existence upon various principles: the *formal cause,* which intrinsically specifies them; the *material cause,* which individualizes them; the *efficient cause,* which brings them into being, and the *final cause,* which denotes the end to which they arc ordained. The exemplary idea is an extrinsic formal cause.

being as such, just as it alone perceives *substance* as such, underneath the sensible qualities of color, sound, and smell, which are direct objects of sense perception; in the same way the intellect alone can perceive directly *{per se)* the realization, or production, or actualization of that which comes in addition to existence. In fact, this realization can have no meaning except in so far as it refers to being, and cannot, therefore, be perceived as such except by that faculty which has for its formal object *being,* and not color, or sound, or the internal act. As soon as the senses show that a change has taken place, reason seeks to explain the why and wherefore. Hence it is of little consequence, by what experience, or by what sensible image we arrive at the idea of cause. This idea does not derive its absolute, universal, and supra-phenomenal entity from sense perception (for it could be an innate idea and still have these same traits), but from its relation to *being,* which is the formal object of the intellect. We are absolutely certain that *every being which is indifferent to existence requires an efficient cause,* that is to say, has to be *realized* (whether in time or from eternity, makes no difference), because the intellect knows intuitively that this being does not exist as something which has existence intrinsically and primarily as its own *{per se primo),* but as something which gets this existence from another *{ab alio* or *per aliud).*

Having proved the absolute necessity of the extrinsic principle of sufficient reason, it is unnecessary to stress the point any further. So far we have referred only to the principle of efficiency in support of this principle, but later on we shall see that it receives additional confirmation from the principle of finality.

This concept of causality, therefore, is by no means anthropomorphic; universal causality is not an externally exerted influence of an internal experience, of an occurrence in human life. Causality is not, like universal attraction, a generalized experience; it is the object of a primary idea of the human

intellect, considered not as human, but as intellect. In so far as it is human, our intellect has for its object the essence of sensible things; in so far as it is intellect, like all intellects, its formal and adequate object is *being.* (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 12, a. 4, c and ad 311m). Now, we have just defined causality as immediately referring to *being,* and have thus established its *ontological validity* and laid the remote foundation of its *transcendental and analogical validity*—in other words of the possibility of attributing it to God. Further on (nos. 29 and 30) we shall see that *being* can be attributed to God, because the notion of being, unlike that of genus, is not univocal, but transcends all genera. The same must be said of causality and of certain other notions (such as those of intellect and will) which are defined by reason of their immediate reference to *being,* and not to some particular mode of *being.*

26) *All "becoming," and every composite, necessarily demands a cause.*

The metaphysical principle of causality, so closely connected with being, applies to everything which does not exist by itself. It includes within its scope all *becoming,* and, on a closer consideration of the question in its more general aspect, everything composite comes under its influence.

First of all, *becoming* demands an *extrinsic and sufficient reason,* because it is a successive union of diverse elements (for instance, when what is violet becomes red). Now, the unconditional union of diverse elements is impossible, for elements that are different in themselves cannot be united (principle of identity). This extrinsic reason is an *efficient cause. Becoming,* which is a gradual process of realization, must be realized by some other thing than itself. In fact, as Aristotle points out in his reply to the arguments of Parmenides and Heraclitus *{Phys.,* Bk. I, c. 8; *Met.,* Bk. IX), the origin of *becoming* presupposes

an intermediate state between *being,* which is determined, and mere nothing; this intermediate state is *being* as yet undetermined or in potency, for what *is already determined, since it is actually being, cannot be the cause of being as such; from nothing, nothing comes; and yet being becomes.* (See no. 21). Hence *becoming* is a transition from potency to act; what becomes hot had a capacity for becoming hot, though it was not actually hot; the pupil who was capable of becoming a philosopher (a potency which no dog possesses), but who was not a philosopher, becomes one. Potency, which *of itself* is not an act, or is not actualized, cannot by itself pass from potentiality to act. To deny this would be to deny the principle of identity. It cannot, therefore, be actualized, except by something which is in act. But it is impossible for the same thing in the same sense to be both in potentiality and in act, and, therefore, the transition from potentiality to actuality must be accomplished by something *else;* and this actualizing or realizing principle is precisely what we call the efficient cause. "Nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by some being already in a state of actuality. But it is not possible that the same thing should be at once actual and potential in the same respect." (Ia, q. 2, a. 3).

Becoming is thus rendered intelligible, not by interpreting it in terms of *rest* (as did Descartes, who considered it to be a mechanical and not a metaphysical problem), but by considering it from the standpoint of *being,* in accordance with the theory of potentiality and actuality into which *being* is divided. As we have already observed (no. 21), this division of being must needs be admitted if we wish to defend against Parmenides the existence of *becoming,* and against Heraclitus the objective validity of the principle of identity. The proofs derived from the theories of movement, efficient causes, and contingency are grounded on this division of being.

From this point of view we not only arrive at a satisfactory explanation of *becoming,* but also, in the static order and in accordance with the ultimate profundities of *being,* which are beyond the scope of *becoming,* we get an explanation of multiplicity or diversity. In the first place, whether we consider multiplicity as a plurality of beings having a common element which establishes their claim to a unity consisting in a certain similarity, which is either specific, generic, or only analogical; or whether we view it as a plurality of parts in one and the same being, by reason of which it claims for them a unity of composition—all multiplicity demands an extrinsic sufficient reason. In fact, such a multiplicity is a union of diverse elements. Now, an unconditional union of diverse elements is impossible. Elements which are in themselves diverse cannot of themselves and as such be united, nor even be similar (principle of identity). *"Multitudo non reddit rationem unitatis"* (multitude does not explain the notion of unity). See further on, in no. 39, the proof for the existence of God from the degrees of perfection in being.

This extrinsic *raison d'être* must be an *efficient cause,* or, in other words, a principle of actualization. In fact, multiplicity, like *becoming,* is always a composition of potentiality and act, and not pure actuality. Aristotle showed how Parmenides was mistaken on this point when he declared all multiplicity, like all movement, to be an illusion. "Everything external to *being* (other than *being* itself) is *non-being,"* said the Eleatic philosopher; "and what is *non-being* is non-existent. Therefore, *being* is one, and there is only one *being;* we can conceive of nothing that could be added to being as a differentiating element, for anything thus added would also be being. In other words, if there were two beings, they would have to be distinguished the one from the other by *something other than being,* and what is *other* than *being* is *non-being.* Now, *being*

exists, whereas *non-being* does not exist; and we cannot think otherwise." (Aristotle, I *Met.,* Bk. I, c. 5; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 9). This was practically a denial of the world as something external to us and its absorption in God, who alone is absolutely one and immutable. Yet we must be grateful to Parmenides for so resolutely affirming the supreme law of thought and reality, *i. e.,* the principle of identity, which is the basis of every proof for the existence of God. After all, it is a fact attested by experience that the world exists, and in it we observe that there is multiplicity. This same multiplicity is noticeable also in the conceptual order. It must be explained, without, however, abandoning the first principle of reason.

Plato in his *Sophist* (241 D, 257 A, 259 E), in order to explain the notion of multiplicity, does not fear to "incur the risk of being considered a parricide, by attacking the formula of Parmenides and affirming the existence of *non-being"* which is the intermediate state between *being* and mere nothing, the limit with regard to *being.* In virtue of this very principle of identity, since the objects of our knowledge all have *being* as their common element, it is only by this common element that they can differ from one another. We are, therefore, compelled to say that they differ by something other than *being;* and what is other than *being,* is *non-being.* We must consequently admit that *non-being* is the intermediate state between *being* and *mere nothing,* the limit of *being.*

Aristotle says that the distinction between various individuals of the same species cannot be explained except by admitting *the reality of non-being,* or *matter,* as the subject and limit of the form common to these individuals. Thus matter—inasmuch as it postulates this particular quantity and not some other—is the principle of individuation and suffices to distinguish two individuals which, if we were to consider merely their form and qualities, would be as indistinguishable as two drops of water. St.

Thomas states still more precisely that multiplicity or distinction between beings in general can be explained only by assuming the *reality* of *non-being* in each of them, or, in other words, a *potency,* which is the subject and limit of the existential act common to all these beings. Hence we say that *"actus multiplicatur et limitatur per potentiam"* (act in its recurrence and restriction depends upon potentiality. (la, q. 7, a. 1; *C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. 52). Minerals, vegetables, animals, men, and angels all have one element in common, namely, *existence;* one principle which differentiates them, namely, an *essence* susceptible of existence and which in the scale of beings ranging from stone to pure spirit receives existence according to its more or less limited capacity for it. We see that this composite of *essence* and *existence,* which results from a union of diverse elements, demands an extrinsic *raison d'etre,* since an unconditioned union of diverse elements is impossible. This *raison d'etre* must be the cause of actualization, since this composite does not actualize itself and is not, as such, self-existent. "Every composite has a cause, for things which are different in themselves cannot unite into one, unless something causes them to unite." (la, q. 3, a. 7).

Multiplicity is thus made intelligible by means of being, by the division of being into potency and act. This division imposes itself if we wish to maintain that the multiple exists, without denying the objective validity of the principle of identity. It is this principle which compels us to distinguish in everything that is, and can as well not be, non-being (real or potency) and actual being, essence and existence. This same principle, together with that of sufficient reason, constrains us to refer all beings to a self-subsistent Being, *"Ipsum esse subsistens,"* namely, God, who alone is His own sufficient reason for existing, because He alone is pure identity. The supreme principle of thought will then appear as the supreme principle of reality. (la, q. 3, a. 4 and 7).

27) *The principle of finality, derived from the principle of sufficient reason. The knowledge of its absolute validity, far from presupposing the knowledge of God's existence, must be the means by which it becomes known to us.*

All *becoming* and every composite, therefore, demands an efficient cause, and likewise a final cause, and two external *raisons d'être.* We shall stress this second point, that of finality, when we come to discuss the proof for God's existence derived from the order observable in the universe. For the present it is sufficient if we show how the principle of finality is connected with that of sufficient reason, in order to complete the general metaphysical notions upon which the proofs for the existence of God ultimately rest.

The idea of an end or purpose is derived from our activity as reasonable beings; we propose to ourselves certain ends, and act for the purpose of reaching them. As for the senses, these, if left to themselves, are no more capable of acquiring the notion of finality than they are of arriving at the notion of causality, or that of substance, or that of being. The animal, remarks St. Thomas, tends by instinct both toward the means and toward the end of its action, without perceiving the *reason* why there is a connection between means and end. Thus the bird picks up wisps of straw for building its nest, without adverting to the fact that the nest is the end or reason of its action. (1a Ilae, q. 1, a. 2). Man, on the other hand, endowed with intelligence, which is a faculty of *being,* discovers in his own actions the idea of finality, and when he wishes to give an intelligent explanation of any action as a faculty of being, no matter whether the one performing the action be intelligent or non-intelligent, animate or inanimate, perceives that this action just as necessarily postulates a final as it does an efficient cause. And so he formulates the principle of finality by affirming that *"Omne agens agit propter finem"* (every agent acts for an end). (Aristotle, *Phys.,* Bk.

II, ch. 3; St. Thomas, *Summa Th.,* la, q. 44, a. 4; la Ilae, q. 1, a. 2; *C. Gentes,* Bk. Ill, ch. 2).

This principle, which is self-evident to all who correctly understand the terms, is by no means an anthropomorphic extension of our internal experience, but can easily be referred back to the principle of sufficient reason.

As soon as we understand what is meant by the word *end,* this principle is self-evident. End is not only the terminus or result of an action, but the *reason why* the action has taken place; it is the το οὐ w«a, *id cujus gratia aliquid fit*—that for the sake of which an agent acts. It is a *definite perfection,* which directly *refers* to the agent as its own good, and for the sake of which the agent acts. It will not do to say that the agent has acquired this end accidentally, by some fortunate chance; it must be the result of a pre-ordained action on his part.

Now every agent, aside from the accidental effects which result from its contact with other agents, produces a *definite* effect according to its own natural law, and this effect directly accrues to it as its own perfection, its own good. It cannot produce this definite and appropriate effect rather than any other, except on condition that it has a *tendency* to produce this particular effect rather than any other. It is not necessary for the agent to know the cause of this tendency, but at least that it is by its nature *ordained* towards this object. Thus die sense of sight produces an act which is not indifferent, but determined, and this act constitutes for it a good, a perfection, which it is natural for it to have. The reason why the sense of sight perceives colors instead of hearing sounds is because it is naturally *ordained* to seeing and not to hearing, because seeing is its very *raison d'être.* This is a self-evident truth, which certainly transcends the range of sense perception, but is perceived at once by the intellect, a faculty of being, when it considers such an organ as the eye or ear. Finality is *sensibile per accidens* and *intelligibile*

per se. No process of reasoning is required to satisfy ourselves that the eye is made for seeing or that the wings of a bird are made for flying. Natural reason sees at once that the bird does not fly *because* it has wings, but it has wings in order that it may fly. Flying is of its very nature. The mind has intuitive knowledge of this fact, which is practically an answer to the objection that it may have happened by some fortunate chance; for chance is accidental and the fortuitous effect is an accidental result of the contact of two agencies, whereas vision, on the contrary, is not an accidental effect of the eye, but the natural exercise of this organic faculty.

This principle of finality ("every agent acts for an end") is not only self-evident as soon as the terms of the proposition are understood, but it can also be proved indirectly by showing that to deny it leads to the absurdity of denying the principle of sufficient reason, which latter cannot be rejected without necessarily rejecting the principle of contradiction.

If every agent produces, not an indifferent effect whatsoever, but a determined effect which belongs to it by right, *though it does not tend towards this effect,* and is not *ordained* for it; if, *e. g.,* the acorn produces the oak rather than the poplar, though it is not ordained for the one rather than for the other; if the eye sees rather than hears, though it is not naturally predisposed for the former act instead of the latter—it follows that there is no way of explaining by the *principle of sufficient reason* how it is that the effect is definitely established and essentially refers to a definite cause. Unless these qualities were somehow present in the efficient cause, they could not be produced in the effect. Now, they are there merely in a *virtual* manner, inasmuch as the efficient cause *tended* to produce this particular effect rather than any other, and inasmuch as it was ordained for this effect. Thus, nutrition is virtually contained in the vegetative faculty and in the food, whereas this nutritive element is not contained in the

faculty of sight and the object seen. A fine play at the theatre is not food for the body, nor is the process of digestion accomplished with the eyes. The stomach is ordained for that purpose, just as the eye is ordained for seeing. To deny this order is to deny the *raison d'être* of the determination and inherent goodness or essential appropriateness of tire effect produced. As St. Thomas remarks (la, q. 44, a. 4), "Every agent acts for an end, otherwise one thing would not follow from the action of the agent more than another, unless it were by chance." If the agent did not *tend* towards its effect, if it did not have at least a natural *intention for* it, if it were not naturally ordained to produce it, it would no more produce this particular effect than any other, except by accident or chance—which would mean that it had no natural effect. In other words, action is essentially *intentional, i. e.,* ordaiped towards some end. Without this tendency not only the effect, but the activity itself, would be without a sufficient cause, *i.e.,* without determination or congruity, or, to put it differently, it could no more be said to be an attraction than a repulsion, vision than audition, digestion than respiration. There must be some special reason why the efficient cause begins to operate, instead of remaining inactive, and why it produces this particular effect rather than another. Finally, the principle of activity itself, *i.e.,* potency (active or passive) cannot be conceived except as something essentially ordained towards its act. *"Potentia dicitur ad actum,"* [66] is one of the formulas expressing the principle of finality. As the imperfect is to the perfect, the relative to the absolute, so is potency to actuality. Only the absolute has its own sufficient reason in itself. That is why the final is the noblest of the four causes.

To say that finality operates after the manner of fortuitous

[08] In God, active potency docs not differ from activity; but the transitive influence of this activity must be directed to some end, not indeed, to that of the acquisition of the Sovereign Good, which God possesses in Himself, but to the manifestation of this good or His glory.

chance, does not explain this principle. Chance is, indeed, an accidental cause (Aristotle, *Phys.,* Bk. II, ch. 8; Leet. 7 to 10 of tire Commentary of St. Thomas) ; but it explains only accidental effects and congruities. In digging a grave, one may accidentally find a treasure. But it cannot be maintained that all the effects produced in nature are accidental, for it is a philosophical truth that the accidental presupposes the essential *Ç'quod est per accidens, accidit ei quod est per se'').* It is an accident if a doctor happens to be a musician, says Aristotle, but that he is a physician and can cure diseases, is no more accidental than it is for a musician to be a musician and to possess a knowledge of his particular art. To relegate the essential to the accidental would mean the complete destruction not only of all nature, but of all *being.* We should then have simply a series of fortuitous events with nothing to bring them about, which is absurd.

Nor will it do to reject the final and have recourse solely to the efficient cause; for in that case there would be no *raison d'être* for the action produced by the agent. If there is not in it some good corresponding to the agent's natural inclination, the action itself, and the fact that it is directed towards some certain end rather than another, would both be inexplicable.[67]

Therefore, every agent acts *for* an end. The word *for* has a meaning, not only when applied to human activity, in which the end is known and intended, but also when applied to any other kind of activity. Whereas the efficient cause is the sufficient reason as a realizing principle (or that by which a thing is accomplished), the final cause is the sufficient reason for the thing which is accomplished. The eyes are made for seeing, and not for hearing. Therefore, the principle of finality, like that of causality, is an analytical one in the Aristotelian sense.

87 The principle of induction that: "Every natural cause in the same circumstances always produces the same effect," is also derived from the principle of sufficient reason; for a change in the effect without a previous change in the cause or in the circumstances, would be without a *raison d'etre.*

Two agents may come in contact by chance, but the proper action of each must necessarily have an end in view. Some[68] have thought that the knowledge of the absolute validity of the principle of finality presupposes absolute certainty of the existence of God as the intelligent cause of the world. They retain the argument based on the order to be found in the world as a popular proof, but they reject every proof for the existence of God based upon intrinsic finality, as begging the question. This finality rests upon the principle that a natural desire cannot remain unfulfilled. We have just seen that the principle of finality, on the contrary, is an analytical principle.[69]

Not only is it self-evident, anteriorly to any knowledge whatever of the existence of God, that every agent acts for an end, but, as we shall see, it can be shown that this end must be known precisely as an end *{sub ratione finis')* by this or some other agent. A means cannot be ordained to an end, except by an intelligent agent, for only an intelligent being can perceive this reason for being ("the object of the intellect is being"), and unite both means and end in one concept. And if intelligence can be referred as a transcendental relation to being, and does not imply an imperfection, any more than this is implied in *being,* then intelligence can and must be attributed analogically to the first cause.

This idea of an intelligent designer will be the basic principle in the proof of the existence of God from the order that exists in the world (see *infra,* no. 40).

These are the metaphysical principles[70] of the proofs .for

88 P. Janet, for instance, in his work, *Les Causes Finales.*

89 See further on (no. 40) the quotations from the writings of P. Gardeil, O.P., Hartmann, Jouffroy, Ravaisson, and Lachelicr.

70 To these principles may be added that of mutation or change. "Every change presupposes a subject." What is actually subject to change, cannot be absolutely simple; it is not simply what it acquires, but it receives what it acquires. Or, if this change is a loss, the loss is to be attributed to a subject. This principle is related to the material cause (the subject of change), just as the principle of finality

the existence of God. They are connected with each other in the following manner: First of all we have the proper object of sensible intuition, which is the *phenomenon;* then the intellect, by means of abstractive intuition, acquires a knowledge of *being* and its first principles, which it connects one and all with the principle of identity, which declares what belongs primarily to *being.*

Thus we have established the *ontological validity* of first ideas and first principles. All that now remains is to defend their *transcendental* validity, or their aptitude to enable us to acquire a certain knowledge *of God as the first and transcendental* cause.

ARTICLE II

THE TRANSCENDENTAL VALIDITY OF FIRST IDEAS AND FIRST PRINCIPLES

So far we have defended simply the *necessity* and the *objective* or *ontological validity* of the metaphysical principles of identity, sufficient reason, causality, and finality, which serve as the basis upon which the proofs of God's existence are proximately and immediately grounded. We have seen that these principles are not merely the result of a series of frequently recurring associations, or simple and necessary laws of thought; for they not only affect (internal and external) phenomena, but also *being* itself. Empiricism and the Subjectivistic Conceptualism of Kant, far from rendering intelligible those facts which we have proved evident to natural reason, attempt to suppress them. It is only traditional Realism or the philosophy of *being* yvhich upholds and explains them.

Here a new difficulty arises: Does the principle of causality

is related to the final cause, that of efficient causality to the cause of the same order, and those of identity and intrinsic sufficient reason to the formal and specifying cause.

enable us to rise from finite beings to the existence of that infinitely perfect transcendental Being, distinct from the world, which we have in mind when we utter the word *God?* Does the principle of causality entitle us to put the little word *is* after the nominal definition of God and say that there *is* a first cause, distinct from the world and infinitely perfect?

This constitutes the problem of not merely ontological, but also *transcendental validity,* of the notion of efficient cause and of the principle of causality; and as this notion and its correlative principle presuppose others that are more universal and simpler, the problem here at issue may be considered in a general way as that of the transcendental validity of first ideas and first principles.

28) *The objections of modern idealistic and empirical Agnosticism and those of medieval Agnosticism*

Modern Agnosticism, whether it be idealistic or empiristic, denies the ontological validity of first ideas or their bearing upon *being* beyond phenomena and, *a fortiori,* their transcendental validity, or that they lead up to a knowledge of God. It confirms its negation by a reference to the antinomies, before which, it claims, reason comes to a halt whenever it seeks to pass beyond phenomena, and especially when it attempts to prove the existence of God and His attributes.

Mention has already been made (no. 13) of the *Kantian antinomies,* especially the fourth, which directly bears upon the question of the existence of God. On the one hand, the "thesis," which is identical with that defended by the metaphysics of the Schools, concludes to the existence of a necessary being, a first cause, in order to explain the manifest changes in the universe. But the "antithesis" seems to be no less conclusively demonstrated, namely, that a necessary being and first cause cannot exist outside of the world, for, directly this cause began to act,

it would admit that it had a beginning, and would therefore belong to time and consequently to the world.

Moreover, according to the third antinomy of Kant, the first cause must be a *free cause.* For a series of causes, to be finite, must start with a cause which has no need of being previously determined and which can determine itself. On the other hand, however, the free act would be without a determining cause; for no sufficient reason could be given why the free cause, from being undetermined, should become determined. (For a solution of this antimony see the second volume of this work, *infra.,* no. 61).

The other two Kantian antinomies, which refer to time, space, and matter, are of less importance in the question that concerns us here. With regard to the first, it is questioned whether the world had a beginning or is caused *ab aeterno.* On this point we remarked above, referring to St. Thomas (1a, q. 46), that neither the thesis nor the antithesis of this antinomy can be demonstrated, and a positive answer can be given only from revelation, since this question is one of those which depend solely upon the divine freedom. As for the second antinomy, which concerns matter or indefinitely divisible corporeal substance, the difficulty is solved by means of the distinction between potency and act, as we explained when discussing the principle of substance. This distinction will also enable us to solve the third and fourth Kantian antinomies, both of which concern freedom and the first cause.

We know how Kant solves this fourth antinomy, as well as the third, by distinguishing between the world of sense or of sensory phenomena, and the intelligible world or of noumena. On this point he follows the metaphysics of the Schools. The antithesis (empiristic in scope), is true of the world of sense, which does not contain a necessary being, and the empirical point of view does not permit us to ascend to the existence of an uncaused first cause. So far we are in agreement with Kant. As for the thesis

(a metaphysico-dogmatic assertion), inasmuch as it admits, outside of the series of sensible objects, a necessary cause in the intelligible or noumenal order, he says it does not involve a contradiction, and we can grant the possibility of a first cause. But does this cause really exist? According to Kant, it can be affirmed only as the result of an act of moral faith. Practical reason postulates the existence of God as the supreme guarantee of the moral order and of the definitive triumph of good, and thus rational theology is subordinated to an independent morality. As for the classical proofs of rational theology, Kant took it upon himself to demonstrate their insufficiency by showing that they are vitiated by that transcendental illusion which lurks in St. Anselm's well-known argument. Reason *(Vernunft),* relying as it does upon causality, which is nothing but a category of the understanding *(Verstand),* cannot claim to go beyond the order of phenomena.

We shall see in our exposition of the classical proofs that our concept of causality is defined, not as Kant defines it, as a functioning of phenomena, but of *being:* for causality means the realization of that which is without being. From this vantage ground it will be possible to conclude to the existence of the primary being or first cause, and to answer the objections formulated by Kant against each of the traditional proofs. For our present purpose it is sufficient to show that the distinction which Kant draws between reason and understanding is false.

When we explained that in each of its three operations (simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning) the intellect has *being* for its formal object, we sufficiently proved the falsity of the Kantian distinction between reason *(Vernunjt)* and understanding *(Verstand)*Besides the three degrees of abstraction, there

1 See St. Thomas, la, q. 79, a. 8 and 9: "Whether reason is distinct from the intellect"; "Whether the higher and lower reason are distinct powers." Also *De Veritate,* q. 15. a. 1 and 2.

is no other way in which the intellect can be distinguished in its reference to objects of the sensible and intelligible order.[2] The first degree abstracts solely from individual matter; it is proper to the experimental sciences, such as chemistry, which considers not this or that particular molecule of water, but the molecule of water as such. The second degree abstracts from all sensible matter, that is to say, from all sensible qualities, but not from quantity; this kind of abstraction is used in mathematics. The third degree abstracts from all that is material (space and time), and only considers *being* as such and its laws; this abstraction is that of metaphysics. This third degree corresponds in a measure to the operations of what Kant calls *reason* (which strives to attain the purely intelligible); but the abstractive intuition of this third degree, though empty of all sensible content, is not, as Kant claims, devoid of all reality. On the contrary, it arrives at *being,* which dominates and transcends all the categories or predicaments or supreme genera, and also at a knowledge of everything which in its definition expresses an immediate relation to *being,* and, like being, abstracts from everything which is material, from space and time. This degree of abstraction includes: (1) the primary divisions of *being* into potentiality and actuality, essence and existence; (2) the transcendental properties of *being;* namely, unity, truth, goodness, and consequently also intelligence (which has a vital relation to *being),* and free will (which has a vital relation to goodness); (3) the four causes conceived as functioning by reason of the potentiality and actuality into which *being* is divided.

Kant could not see how the formal reason of causality transcends time as well as space, and how it can have unchanging eternity for its measure.

2 Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* Bk. VI, ch. I, Leet. 1 of St. Thomas, and Bk. X, c. Ill; St. Thomas, *Sup. Boëtium de Trinitate,* q. 5, a. 1; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Phil., Logica,* q. 27, a. 1; *De Distinctione Scientiarum;* Zigliara, *Summa Phil.,* Vol. I, pp. 296-302.

Modern Agnosticism, in its empirical phase, likewise rejects the transcendent validity of primary ideas, since it does not admit that they have an ontological bearing, but holds that their value is purely phenomenal and empirical. Like the Agnosticism of Kant, this modern form of Agnosticism confirms its denial by appealing to the antinomies in which, so it claims, the rational theology of the Schoolmen becomes hopelessly involved. "On the one hand," writes Spencer, "the absolute is required as first cause, and on the other hand the absolute as such cannot be a cause; it would be related to its effect. If you say that it exists first by itself and afterwards becomes a cause, you are confronted with another difficulty: for how can the infinite become that which it was not from the first? (This would mean that it acquires a perfection). If you say that this can be so because it is free: then you again contradict yourself; for freedom supposes consciousness, and consciousness, being only conceivable as a relation, cannot belong to the absolute," [3] but implies a duality of subject and object, which is opposed to the perfect simplicity of the Absolute. Along with these objections we have certain well-known classical difficulties, for instance, how can we reconcile the divine simplicity with the plurality of perfections which are formally, and not merely virtually, attributed to God? How can we reconcile God's infinite justice with His mercy, His foreknowledge with the freedom of the human will, the omnipotence of an infinitely good God with the existence of evil?

Before concluding our exposé of these objections, a few words must be said about medieval Agnosticism, whose chief exponent was Maimonides (Rabbi Moses). In these latter days, certain Catholic writers have found fault with the Thomistic doctrine of analogy as scarcely differing from the teaching of Maimonides, except perhaps in words. In matter of fact there is a very real and profound difference between the two positions.

[8] *First Principles,* p. 32.

Maimonides did not, Eke the modern Agnostics, deny the ontological vaHdity of primary ideas, but he so depreciated it that the only logical consequence for him would have been to reject it altogether. It was beyond his comprehension how ideas acquired from finite things can express a perfection which is *formally* present in the Infinite, and how the plurality of these perfections can be reconciled with the absolute simplicity of God.

In his *De Potentia* (q. 7, a. 5), where he discusses this question more fully than in the *Summa Theologica,* St. Thomas sums up the opinion of Maimonides as follows: "According to him, the positive absolute terms (good, wise), when applied to God, must be understood in two ways: (1) To say that God is wise does not mean that wisdom is in Him, but that He performs His works after the manner of a wise man, who ordains all things to a legitimate end; (2) To say that God is good, or that He lives, docs not mean that wisdom and life are in Him, but that He *is not* like non-wise and non-living beings. Others say that the expression, *'God is good'* simply means that *God is the cause of goodness* which is found in things; in other words, goodness is in God not *formally,* but solely in a virtual manner, in so far as He is able to produce it." (Cfr. S. *Th.,* la, q. 13, a. 2).

In article 7 of the same question of his *De Potentia* St. Thomas restates the opinion of Maimonides in the following simple words: "Some have thought that nothing which can be attributed to God and the creature belongs to them analogically, but merely in a purely *equivocal* sense. This was the opinion of Maimonides, as is evident from his writings." "This opinion," adds the Angelic Doctor, "cannot be true. ... If it were, the words we use to express our knowledge of God would be vain, devoid of meaning, *and all the demonstrations of the existence of God given by the philosophers would be sophistical;* for instance, that based on the principle that whatever is in potentiality becomes an

act by some active being, would not permit us to conclude that all other beings depend for their actuality upon God's being; to conclude thus would be a *fallacy of equivocation,* and the same is true of the other demonstrations referring to God." The same judgment is expressed in the *Summa,* q. 13, a. 5.

This Agnostic opinion, according to St. Thomas, is not only false, but also *contrary to the faith.* He says in effect: "This view is opposed to what the Apostle says: *'The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.'* (Rom. I, 20)." (la, q. 13, a. 5). And in the treatise *De Potentia* (q. 7, a. 5) he writes: "If this opinion were true, it would be just as correct to say that 'God is angry,' or that 'God is a fire,' as to say that 'God is wise;' but this is contrary to the teaching of the saints and the prophets when they spoke of God *(hoc autem est contra positionem sanctorum et prophetarum loquentium de Deo')."* It is not, therefore, in a merely equivocal or metaphorical sense that absolute perfections are attributed to God.

In addition to this St. Thomas remarks *(De Potentia,* q. 7, a. 5) : "These perfections are not to be taken simply in *a negative sense.* To say that God is living, does not merely mean that He is *not non-living,* that He is not like inanimate beings. A negation is always understood on the basis of an affirmation, for every negative proposition is proved by an affirmative; and hence if the human intellect could not positively affirm anything about God, it could not deny anything about Him, and He would be absolutely unknowable."

Finally, as St. Thomas remarks (la, q. 13, a. 2), it is not enough to say that the propositions, *"God is good, God is being,* merely signify that God is the cause of goodness and of being in created things." It might in like manner be said that "God is a body, or an animal," because He is the cause of bodies and of animals. Corporeity and animality are perfections which by their

very nature include imperfection; for this reason they are called mixed perfections, and cannot exist in God except *virtually,* inasmuch as He can produce them. But on what grounds shall we claim the same for *being,* goodness, and intellect, all of which, as is generally admitted, are predicated *formally* of God?

We will now prove the transcendental validity of primary ideas, first directly, and, secondly, indirectly by showing the absurdity of the contradictory proposition.

29) *Direct proof of the transcendental validity of primary ideas.*

Let us present this proof in its simplest form, without as yet going deeply into the Thomistic doctrine of analogy, as we shall have to do later, when we come to discuss the nature of God and how His various attributes can be reconciled with the divine simplicity.

This proof may be condensed into the following syllogism:[4]

There is nothing repugnant in the notions of absolute and analogical perfections expressing analogically, according to their proper meaning, the absolutely perfect Being; and in matter of fact they will truly make known this same Being to us, if the universe demands a first cause which possesses these perfections.[5]

Now, the primary notions of *being*—unity, truth, goodness, cause, end, intellect, will, etc.—denote *absolute and analogical perfections.*

4 See S. Th., la, q. 13, a. 3, c, ad turn; a. 5; and q. 4, a. 2 and 3.

5 It is sufficient to show *a priori* that there is nothing contrary to human reason in attributing analogically these absolute and analogical perfections to the supremely perfect Being, if such a Being exists. There is no necessity for us to establish *a priori* the positive possibility of the analogy of attribution; *a posteriori* proof drawn from the notion of causality will establish the validity of its claim to recognition. (See above no. 8).—Note that the "proper meaning" is understood to be in opposition to the *metaphorical sense,* as, for instance, when we speak of God's wrath.

Therefore, there is nothing repugnant in holding that these primary notions should express analogically the supremely perfect Being; and they will actually and truly make known this Being to us, if the universe demands a first cause which possesses these perfections.

The major of this syllogism becomes evident if we advert to the fact that an *absolute perfection {perfectio simpliciter simplex'),* in contradistinction to a mixed perfection, is one whose formal concept includes no imperfection. The notions of these perfections cannot be said to be unfit to express, after a fashion, the supremely perfect Being; for it is only the imperfect which is incompatible with the idea of God. If, moreover, these perfections arc *analogical?* or, in other words, capable of existing according

0 ANALOGY OF ATTRIBUTION.		("Thus by simple attribution or extrinsic denomi-! nation, we say of the *air* that it is *healthy,* be-Lcause it is conducive to health in the animal.
ANALOGY OF PROPORTIONALITY.	METAPHORICAL-	Thus the lion is called the king of beasts, because as the king is above his subjects, so is the lion above other animals.
	PROPER-	Thus sensation and intellection are entitled in a proportionate sense to be called knowledge; for sensation is to the sensible object what intellection is to the intelligible object. Likewise the term *being* may be applied to substance and accident by reason of a similarity of proportion between them: substance _ accident / its being its being / or substance as a mode of being is proportionately related to accident as a mode of being, in that each is being.

See John of St. Thomas, O.P. *Cursus Philosophiae, Logica,* q. 13, a. 3.

to their essentially different modes, there is no reason for regarding it as impossible that they should conform to an infinite mode, provided such a mode includes nothing more than what is implied by the formal concepts of the various perfections; consequently, their manner of expressing God will be analogical, and it is only in a negative and a relative sense that the mode of the divine Being will be known. The development of the minor will make this point clearer.

This minor can be based first of all on the absolutely primary notions of being, unity, truth, and goodness; then, as a corollary to this, it can be shown to apply to the ideas of cause, end, intellect, and will.

As St. Thomas shows (la, q. 13, a. 3, c, ad turn), the absolutely primary notions of our intellect, such as being, truth, goodness, do not include in their *formal concept* any imperfection, although the *limited mode* of their realization in created things is an imperfection. In their formal concept they are independent of this mode, and every element of imperfection can be removed from them. In fact, the notion of *being* does not *per se* include such limitations as that of species or genus, but dominates (transcends) the genera, and for that reason is called by the Scholastics a transcendental;[7] though it dominates them, yet it is predicated of all the genera or categories of being, according to essentially different *modes;* such modes are substance, quantity, quality, action, etc.

Likewise, from a philosophical consideration of the hier-

7 Hence *"transcendental"* has here a different meaning than in the expression *"transcendental validity";* the former implies that which dominates the genera or categories of being, while the latter denotes what surpasses created things. The term *"transcendental"* is employed by Kant in quite a different sense, namely, of all knowledge which is not so much occupied with objects as with the mode of our cognition of these objects, so far as this mode is possible *a priori. (Critique of Pure Reason,* Intr., c. vii).

archical order in the scale of beings, we perceive that the term *being* applies to all things, to the stone, to the plant, to the animal, to man—though the concept itself of *being* does not admit of any of the limitations and imperfections essentially inherent in the objects of which it is predicated. If the idea of a man who is infinitely great, powerful, and perfect, manifestly implies a contradiction, it cannot be said to be an absurdity to speak of an infinitely perfect *being,* one without limitations. The term humanity designates a mixed perfection, which essentially includes imperfection, whereas the notion of *being* implies pure or absolute perfection.

It is the same with unity, truth, and goodness. For unity is the undividedness of being; truth is the conformity of being with the intellect, or, conversely, the conformity of the intellect with the being that measures it; goodness implies the desirability of being by reason of the perfection inherent in it. There is no imperfection formally implied by these notions, and if an infinitely swift movement is a manifest contradiction, the same cannot be said of infinite goodness.

Moreover, in the order of finite beings we observe that the absolute perfections expressed by these primary notions are essentially *analogical,* that is to say, they are susceptible of formally existing according to essentially different modes. *Being,* indeed, by the very fact that it dominates the genera and is found in each of them on different grounds, applies to all of them in an analogical or proportionate sense.[8] It embraces everything and

[8] See Aristotle, *Met.,* Bk. X, c. i; IV, c. i; Bk. IV, c. i; Bk. XII, c. 4; *Anal. Post.,* Bk. II, c. 13 and 14; *Nicomachean Ethics,* I, c. 6. For an understanding of the Aristotelian doctrine on the analogy of proportion one must read the fifth book of the *Metaphysics,* in which Aristotle classifies the different significations of each metaphysical notion; here he discusses the notions of principle, cause (the four causes), nature or essence, necessity, unity, truth, being, identity, diversity, multiplicity, order, perfection, etc. After having enumerated, according to the order of invention, the various meanings of each of these notions, which are analogical (except those of the categories and the highest genera), he reduces

penetrates into the very *differentiae* of the genera; it is *essentially diversified,* according to these diverse modes. We say of substance that it *exists in itself;* we also speak of accident as existing, but in quite a different sense, namely, *in another.* The *being* of accident is not in every respect like that of substance, but it is both like and unlike; in other words, it is analogous. On the other Irand, perfect similarity, for instance the similarity between two men who belong to the same human species, may truly be called univocal;9 whereas mere homonyms, or

the various meanings to a certain unity, which is the *unity of proportionality,* in the proper, and not in the metaphorical sense. No better commentary on the general principles of analogy and no better application of these principles can be found than in this fifth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics.*

8 We will not here insist upon the radical difference between the analogue and the univocal (genus or species); we shall discuss this point at length when we come to consider the nature of God and His attributes. It is sufficient to observe here that in direct contrast with the transcendental notions (which are above the categories), every genus, no matter *how high in the scale of being it may be, is always univocal;* this means that, with regard to each of the objects of which it is predicated, it denotes absolutely the same thing *{rationem simpliciter eandem).* Hence it is that the genus "animal," when predicated of a man and a dog has the same meaning, namely, a being endowed with vegetative and sensitive life. This generic notion of animality is a common and basic trait to which, if the *extrinsic* differences are added, we have either man (a rational being) or else dog. Similarly, the higher genus "quality" denotes absolutely the same thing in its different species (habit, potentiality, sensible quality, figure).

With *being {ens et res),* unity, truth, and goodness, the case is quite different. "Being and unity," says Aristotle, "arc not genera; they cannot be further modified by the addition of extrinsic differences (as when, for instance, rationality is added to animality); in fact, it is absolutely necessary that the difference should have *being* and *unity." {Metaph.,* Bk. I, c. 1; Bk. IV, c. 1; Bk. XII, c. 4). Hence, being and unity penetrate tosthe very differences of things, and for this reason are predicated of different beings *κατ' ànaXoylav, secundum proportionem,* or proportionately. *{Anal. Post.,* II, c. 13 and 14). This means that the idea of *being* is not predicated of the various beings in the same sense (as the note of animality applies in the same sense to all animals); but each participates in *being in its own way {ratio entis in omnibus non est simpliciter eadem, sed eadem secundum quid, id est secundum proportionem;* the idea *being,* as applied to all things, is not absolutely the same, but only after a fashion, that is, proportionately). *Being* as such is by its very nature diversified; it is not a common and basic note to which can be added the difference proper to substance and that proper to accident; since these differences are also *being,* the word *being,* as applied to substance and accident,

words spelled alike, but which otherwise have nothing in common, are called by the Scholastics *equivocal* terms; thus the term *dog,* as applied to an animal and to a certain astronomical constellation, is used in what we call an equivocal sense.

The one, the true, and the good are also predicated analogically or proportionally of all the categories of being. We speak of a good fruit, a good quality, a good action, etc. When we say of a fruit that it is *good,* we refer to its *natural quality;* but when we say of a virtuous man that he is *good,* we use the term in quite a different sense, for we mean that he has a *moral character.*

If, therefore, the notion of *being* is that of an absolute perfection, it cannot be said to be impossible that it should denote, in its own proper sense, the absolutely perfect Being, for it is only the imperfect which is incompatible with the idea of God. Neither is it an impossibility for this notion of *being* to be applied analogically to the Supreme Being, for *being* is capable of realization according to its essentially different modes, and there are no *a priori* grounds for saying that an infinite mode is inconsistent with the notion of *being. Being,* according to its formal notion, is a pure perfection without any limitations.

The same must be said of unity, truth, and goodness. Why cannot goodness be realized according to an infinite mode, since in itself this term implies neither limitation nor imperfection? Why can we not say of something that it is *absolutely and infinitely good,* since *de jacto* in the order of created things it is legitimate to say of things that they are *physically or morally good,* though, of course, we use the term in essentially different senses?

We cannot, therefore, affirm that these primary notions are insufficient in themselves to enable us to acquire some *positive* knowledge of God, if He exists. But it is only in a *negative* and

does not denote absolutely the same thing, but proportionally similar things; substance *has its own mode of being,* and *so has accident.*

relative way that the divine mode of being, of unity, truth, and goodness is known by us, and hence we speak of such goodness as non-finite or supreme.

This was evidently the conviction of St. Thomas[10] when he opposed Maimonides.

What has just been said of being, unity, truth, and goodness, must also be said of the notions of efficient cause, end, intellect, and will. In truth, these latter notions are not classed among the transcendentals,[11] which dominate all the genera of being and are found present according to their various modes, analogically, in each of them. The notions of cause, end, intellect, and will are not in fact found in all the genera, but are defined by their immediate relation to one of the transcendentals, and thus in their formal concept transcend the limitations or imperfections of the genera, and, like the transcendentals to which they are essentially related, are analogical.

Thus the *efficient cause* and the *final cause* are related to *being,* for they constitute the *sufficient extrinsic reasons* why a thing is not self-existent. To cause or produce implies no imperfection, for it means nothing else but the *realization* of something. We can see that an all-perfect being cannot be the formal principle of physical heat or fight, because heat and light, implying limitation, cannot be formally in such a being. But why cannot an infinitely perfect Being be a realizing principle, just

10 St. Thomas says explicitly: "Whatever good we attribute to creatures, pre-exists in God, and that in a more excellent and higher way. Hence it does not follow that God is good, because He causes goodness; but rather, on the contrary, He diffuses goodness in things because He is good." (la, q. 13, a. 2). And in *Contra Gentes,* Bk. I, c. 30, towards the end, we read: "The names which we use to express the supereminent mode in which the aforesaid perfections exist in God, have either a *negative* force, as when we say that God is infinite; or else they express His *relation* to other beings, as when we say that He is the first cause or the highest good."

11 These transcendentals, according to the Scholastics, are six in number: being, thing, the one, something, the true, and the good. (See St. Thomas, *De Ventale,* q. I, a. x; *De Potentia,* q. 9, a. 7, ad 6um, I3um).

as it is of the very nature of light to illumine and of fire to heat? And if this Being can be an efficient cause, it *a fortiori* can be a final cause, which is the supreme *raison d'etre* of the order we perceive in things.

We can eliminate from the efficient cause that imperfect mode which is found to be its inseparable accompaniment in finite causes; for there is nothing in the notion of such a cause which militates against this; and since, like *being,* it is analogous, we cannot say on *a priori* grounds that it is opposed to an infinite mode. This mode would explain why the causal or realizing action is not an accident, but is identified with the infinite being of the agent; why it is not transitory and passing, but permanent and eternal; why it is not formally transitive, but formally immanent, though capable of producing an external effect, for which reason it could truly be called a virtually transitive action. And this eternal action, which would add nothing to the *being of* the primary agent—why could it not have its effect in time, at a moment previously willed, if it is a free action, and if it dominates time and its product, like the movement of which it is the measure? The formal concept of causality does not *per se* include any of those imperfections which are found in finite beings. To say that an action is causal, means that it is a realizing action, but not necessarily accidental, temporal, formally transitory and transitive. These imperfections constitute the created mode of causality, but this notion, for the sole reason that it denotes an absolute and analogical perfection, is susceptible also of another mode.12

12 *Substance, i. e.,* "that which is capable of existing in itself and not in another," implies no imperfection in its concept. True, it does not seem to be an analogical perfection, since it constitutes a genus (the first of the categories). But it is not considered as a genus except inasmuch as it is capable of existing in itself, though not identified with its existence. And there is nothing to prevent a substance from existing, not only *in* itself, but also *by* itself. (Sec la, q. 3, a. 5, ad turn).

As for the notions of intellect and will, the former is defined by its immediate relation to *being,* the latter by its immediate relation to *goodness.* Therefore, like *being* and goodness, the notions of intellect and will are analogical, and like them, too, they imply no imperfection. As we shall see, the same must be said about the intellectual virtues of wisdom and prudence (providence) and about the virtues of the will—justice and mercy.

Undoubtedly, the intellect, like the will, is a faculty or power capable of acting, and distinct from the numerous acts which it produces; but this is merely the finite mode of the intellectual life which, because it is an absolute and analogical perfection, is susceptible of a higher mode. Since the formal object of the intellect is *being,* is there anything repugnant in the notion that there should be an intellect which is the adequate measure of *being,* of all things, both real and possible, and which is, therefore, omniscient? And since the knowledge of everything that is intelligible would be the constant attribute of such an intelligence, why could it not be said to be the identification of absolute intelligence with pure being? Reason cannot prove this to be an evident impossibility.

The same must be said of the will, which is specified by goodness in general, and is free to accept or reject any particular form of good which may be presented to it. In us, of course, the will is simply a faculty distinct from its acts of love or the volitions which it produces. But why should it be unreasonable to admit an absolutely perfect will, which would be an eternal act of love identified with the supreme good, the constant object of this love, and therefore free in its love of finite goods?

Finally, the virtues of the intellect and of the will—wisdom, mercy, justice—are in us accidents, qualities, acquired habits which are capable of development. But that is merely their finite mood of being; the formal concept of these virtues is

independent of this mode, and implies no imperfection, and as an analogical concept, it is not incompatible with a higher mode of being. Wisdom formally denotes knowledge acquired by a scrutiny of the highest causes, and this knowledge need not be the result of a transitory act proceeding from an intellectual habit acquired by study and experience. Why should it be impossible to admit an infinite and eternal wisdom which would exhaust all the possibilities of whatever is knowable?

Our conclusion is that it is not incompatible with reason to assume that these primary notions express analogically the supreme and perfect Being, and that *de facto* they will truly make known to us this Being if die universe demands a first cause possessing these perfections.

Thus far we have shown that it is not contrary to reason to predicate in an analogical sense these absolute and analogical perfections of a supremely perfect Being, if such a Being exists. It is not necessary to establish *a priori* the positive possibility of this attribution,[13] because it can be proved *a posteriori,* by way of causality.

The proofs for the existence of God will plainly show that the movement which is in the universe *demands* a mover who does not need to be moved himself; that contingent beings ultimately demand a cause necessary in itself; that composite and imperfect beings demand an absolutely simple and perfect cause, and that, finally, the order in the universe necessarily presupposes an intelligent designer. The first cause thus required must possess those absolute perfections which are to be found in the world, for otherwise it could not be said to have caused them, and there would be no resemblance or analogy between this cause and its effect—which would be contrary to the very notion of cause (see la, q. 4, a. 3). To be the cause of another *being* means, indeed, to bring this other *being* into existence, to actualize or

18 Sec *supra,* no. 8.

determine it. Now, since a determining cause, as such, is restricted by the limits of its own determination, it follows that between the cause and its effect there must be a resemblance, not necessarily generic or specific, but at least analogical. This is the meaning of the principle: *Omne agens agit sibi simile*—every agent produces its own kind—which is derived directly from the principle of causality.

Before returning to this way of causality, we know that it is not contrary to reason to state that the absolutely perfect Being, if it exists, can be expressed analogically by means of the primary notions. The positive perfections in God will be made known to us by an analysis of the *principle of causality;* by the processes of *negation* and *eminence* we shall acquire a *negative* and *relative* knowledge of the divine mode of these perfections.

These considerations constitute the direct defence of the transcendental validity of primary notions, which may be succinctly formulated thus: these notions express the absolute and analogical perfections that the first cause of necessity possesses. This direct defence can be supplemented by an indirect proof showing the absurdity of the contrary assumption.

30) *Indirect proof of the transcendental validity of primary notions.*

To deny this validity, or even to declare it to be doubtful, involves the contention that reason left to itself must always at least remain in doubt concerning the existence of a transcendental primary cause. What would follow from this?

Such an invincible doubt would refer either to the primary cause as such, or to its transcendental character.

If the existence of a primary cause must remain forever in doubt, it follows either that a thing may begin to exist without a cause, or that the *ensemble* of things which are not self-existent may exist without a cause, in which case the principle of causality

itself is doubtful, and the principle of contradiction is no longer certain, for then it may be that some things exist neither by themselves nor are produced by a cause, and consequently do not differ from nothingness; for it is of the very nature of nothingness to be neither self-existent nor conditioned, and since it is a non-entity, it is independent of the principle of sufficient reason. Now, to doubt the principle of contradiction, or the opposition between *being* and *nothingness,* is absurd.

If the invincible doubt is concerned only with the transcendence of the primary cause, it follows that this cause is perhaps immanent, not really distinct from the world, which is composite and changing; that it is a creative *becoming,* a creative evolution,[14] or a creative idea,[15] which admits of composition and change; and in that case we are confronted with the absurdities of Pantheism and must admit with Hegel that a creative *becoming,* which is its own sufficient reason, implies a contradiction in terms.

Hence we see that this indirect proof of the transcendental validity of primary notions is a proof of God's existence by the logical method known as *reductio ad absurdum.*

We have yet to discuss the question how these primary notions enter into the *a posteriori* demonstration of the existence of God. What is the middle term of this demonstration, and how can it be given transcendental validity?

31) *The middle term of our demonstration is analogical. The force of such a demonstration.*

As we have already remarked, it is by means of analogical,

14 According to Bergson *(L'Evolution Créatrice),* the principle of all things is a consciousness in process of evolution, a consciousness which has gradually developed in the intellectual life and is ever seeking to transcend it.

15 See Hegel, *Logik.*

and not by means of univocal concepts that we demonstrate the existence of God. The middle term, therefore, will have to be an analogous term, and the proof will assume the following syllogistic form: *The world necessarily demands a primary extrinsic* cause. *Now, we call the primary extrinsic cause of the world by the name of God. Therefore, God exists.*

We here presuppose only the nominal definition of God, the idea that comes to the mind when the word *God* is mentioned. This is the middle term of all the demonstrations which follow (cfr. la, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2). It is an analogical term, which is all that is required. Though analogical, it has a sufficient unity, so that the syllogism does not contain four terms. Cajetan shows in his treatise, *De Nominum Analogia* (ch. 10), that a concept which has unity of proportion can be the middle term in a syllogism, provided it has the same extension in the major and minor. For this condition to be realized, the term must be employed according to the similarity of proportion which exists between the analogues, and not according to what properly constitutes this analogue in itself. For instance, the relative concept of *cause,* which we shall use as middle term in all our demonstrations, must denote causality, both in the major and in the minor, causality not precisely as it applies in the order of created things, but in this that the causality of created things is similar, by a certain similarity of proportion, to causality of a higher order. Whatever is predicated of a similar object as such, is predicated also of that which it resembles *(quidquid convenit simili in eo quod est simile, convenit etiam illi cujus est simile;* Cajetan, *ibid.').* The principle of identity, or of contradiction, which assures us of the formal validity of the argument, must not be restricted to equivocal notions. "Contradiction consists in the affirmation and negation of the same attribute of the same subject, and not in the affirmation and negation of the same univocal attribute in the same uni-

vocal subject. The identity between things and their objective reasons has the force of an identity which is by way of proportion." (Cajetan, *ibid.}.*

This is not a logical thesis set up for the purpose of demonstrating the existence of God, but is clearly expressed by Aristotle, who was the first to establish the theoretical principles of demonstration *{Anal. Post.,* II c. xii and xiv; cfr. the Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 17 and 19). After having discussed the middle term when it is univocal, he remarks: "Ετε δ ἀλλον τρο'ττον ϊστι κατά το ἀνάλογον ἱκλίγαν (there is another way in which we say that the concept is common by way of analogy, *i. e.,* by way of proportion). The comment of St. Thomas on this passage is as follows: "But when the concept is a common analogue, the unity of proportion between the analogous objects reveals certain other characteristics, as, for instance, that they are of the same generic or specific nature." 16 This unity of proportion is the

16 John of St. Thomas *{Cursus Phil., Logica,* q. 93, a. 5), has cast into a concise formula what Aristotle, St. Thomas, Cajetan, and the Thomists generally teach concerning analogy: "The analogue of proportion, which is intrinsic in its reference to all that is analogous to it, reunites in a single concept the notions of *one, inadequate,* and *imperfect.* In fact, this concept does not abstract from the analogues in this sense that it contains potentially only, and not actually, that which differentiates the analogues, but in this sense, chat it does not denote these differences explicitly, although it contains them actually." This is the same as saying with Aristotle that being does not admit of differences which are extrinsic to it, and thus we cannot abstract perfectly the notion of being from its differences, as we can the notion of genus from that of species. (See *infra,* Part II, ch. III).—Later, in discussing the divine attributes, we shall see that St. Thomas, by submitting the analogue of a genus to the finest of distinctions, holds an intermediate position between the Agnosticism of Maimonides and that of the Nominalists—revived by the Modernists—and the exaggerated Realism of Gilbert de la Porréc, which reappears in the writings of Rosmini and other Ontologists. (See Billuart, ed. 1857, t. I, pp. 51-62).—These two extreme opinions result from considering the analogue univocally, whence it follows that, if the analogical concept denotes a formal attribute in God, it posits in Him a real distinction (Gilbert de la Porrée), or if it does not admit this distinction in God, it is because this analogical concept does not denote one of His formal attributes. Like Scotus, Suarez *{Disp. Metaph.,* 2, sect. I, no. 9; sect. II, nos. 13, 21, 34) seems to have misconceived the important distinction between the analogue and the univocal. From what he says, one must logi-

basis of all reasoning in natural theology. Having demonstrated the existence of God and that He is not dependent upon matter, this unity of proportion will be our authority for asserting also of rational beings that immateriality explains why they have intelligence (a positive analogical concept), and hence that they have a will and that this will is free (likewise positive analogical concepts) ; it is also true, in a proportionate sense, to say of God that His absolute immateriality is the reason why He knows all things (la, q. 14, a. 1), and why His will is absolutely free (la., q. 19, a. i, 2, 3).

Further on (Vol. II, ch. Ill) we shall explain more at length that there are not two unknown elements in each of these proportions, but two terms known immediately with their created mode, one term expressing the uncreated analogue which is mediately known (the first cause), whence we infer the presence of the fourth term, which until then remained unknown. It may be expressed by saying that there is a similarity of proportion between the creature with its mode of being and the first cause with its mode of being.

cally conclude that being is diversified, like genus, by extrinsic differences. We fail to see how *being* can still be predicated of these differences, and we are once more confronted with the full force of the arguments of Parmenides against multiplicity. If the differentiating modes of being arc not themselves *being,* then the multiplicity of beings is an illusion, for all things are one. There is only one reply to this argument, namely, that *being* is not univocal, but analogical, and implicitly includes its differentiating modes. (I *Met., c.* 5; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 9; XIII *Met.,* c. 11). Moreover, this logical thesis is closely connected with another, which declares that there is a real distinction between essence and existence in created beings and which refutes this same argument of Parmenides from the metaphysical point of view. (See *injra,* Vol. II, ch. III). On this question of a real distinction, whether it was held by St. Thomas, and what is the importance of this doctrine in the Thomistic synthesis, we are compelled to disagree completely with Chossat *{Diet, de Théol. Cath.,* art. *"Dieu,"* cols. 889-890). See in the *Revue des Sciences Phil, et Theol.,* of April, 1909, the article by Garrigou-Lagrange, entitled, *"La distinction réelle entre essence et existence et le principe d'identité."* See also what Chossat, Gardeil, and Mandonnet have written on this subject in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1910.

32) *This analogical knowledge enables the human mind to grasp the fact of God's existence, and to perceive something of His essence; but it is not a quidditative perception, that is, a perception of tvhat properly constitutes the essence of the Deity.*

From what has been said it follows that this analogical knowledge cannot be a knowledge of the divine essence such as it is in itself *Çprout est in se)* ; nor can we positively define the same by any definition strictly so-called; however, by means of this knowledge we can perceive the existence of God and gain some idea of His essence. This is the common teaching of the Schoolmen (see St. Thomas in the *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 12, a. 12; q. 13, a. 1; q. 88, a. 3; Cajetan, *De Nominum Analogia;* Scotus, *In I, Dist.,* 3, q. 1; Capreolus, *In I,* d. 2, q. 1, a. 1, 4th to 8th conclusion). True, as Cajetan remarks *{Comment, in lam,* q. 88, a. 3 *§ Adverte),* there was some difference of opinion on this point between the Scotists and the early Thomists. Scotus and his school admitted that we can acquire a natural knowledge of the divine essence by reasoning, whereas the Thomists denied this and maintained that we cannot know naturally *tvhat God is {quid est),* but only *that He is {quia est),* and *tvhat He is not {quid non est).* However, as Cajetan observes, in the above-mentioned treatise and in his *De Ente et Essentia* (c. VI, q. 14), the difference between the two schools is merely a matter of words. "We must distinguish," he writes, "between knowing an essence *{cognoscere quidditatem),* and knowing it quidditatively *{cognoscere quidditative).* To know an essence, it suffices to apprehend one of its essential predicates, for instance, one that is generic; to know it according to its quiddity, we must apprehend all its essential predicates, down to the ultimate difference. On the basis of this distinction it must be affirmed that we can acquire a natural knowledge of the divine essence by reasoning, and that is what Scotus meant; but we cannot know the divine

essence according to its quiddity, and that is what the early Thomists had in mind." *"To know God according to His quiddity is the same as to know Him as He is in Himself,* and this knowledge demands that human nature be raised to the supernatural order. Unaided natural reason alone cannot know what constitutes the *Deity,* in which the *absolute perfections are identified.* It can acquire positive knowledge only of the analogical predicates common to God and to creatures (such as *being,* act, one, true, good, etc.), and the divine mode of the absolute perfections is known only negatively and relatively. Aristotle called this knowledge derived from *common predicates,* knowing *that a thing is {Anal. Post.,* II, c. VIII; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 7), and that is the reason why the early Thomists said that we can know of God only *that He is,* which evidently did not mean that theodicy was restricted to the mere affirmation of His existence.

This conclusion, formulated by Cajetan, admitted by Suarez *{Disp. Met.,* disp. XXX, sect. 12), and unanimously accepted by the Scholastics,[17] can easily be proved. From the fact that we cannot naturally know God except by His effects, the perfection of which is necessarily an inadequate expression of the divine perfection (Ia, q. 12, a. 12),[18] we can affirm but three points: (1) that these effects necessarily demand the existence of a first cause which exists of and by itself; (2) that whatever perfection there is in the effects must pre-exist in the cause; (3) that the perfections which formally do not imply any imperfection, that is to say, of which reason formally abstracts from the *created mode,* which is essentially imperfect, must exist in God according to a *divine mode.* We may even say that absolute perfections, such as *being,* truth, goodness, intellect, freedom, justice, mercy, can be found *without any admixture of imperfection*

17 Cfr. Chossat, *Dictionnaire Apologétique,* art. *"Agnosticisme,"* cols. 58-62.
18 See also, Ia, q. 13, a. 5.

only in God. "None is good but God alone," we read in the Gospel of St. Luke (XVIII, 19), which means that wherever else they are found, these perfections invariably have an admixture of imperfection. Therefore, we predicate them *formally* of God, according to an intrinsic denomination (see *infra,* Vol. II, ch. 3). But we do not positively know the *nature of the divine mode,* according to which they are identical with the divine essence, and hence we say that they exist in God *formaliter eminenter—formally* and *eminently.* "But to express the supereminent mode according to which these perfections exist in God, only such terms are available which have either a negative meaning, as when we say that God is eternal or infinite, or else express His relation to creatures, as when He is said to be the first cause or supreme good" (C. *Gentes,* I, c. XXX, towards the end). The error of Maimonides and of some of our own contemporaries[19] is to apply what St. Thomas said of the *mode* in which the perfections are verified in God, to the *formal reason* of these absolute perfections. If this were correct, the only knowledge we could have of God would be by means of extrinsic, negative or relative terms, as when we say metaphorically that He is *angry* with a sinner. Our knowledge of absolute perfections is analogical and positive, and we affirm them of God as expressive of causality *(per viam causalitatisf-,* "not that God is good because He causes goodness, but, on the contrary, He diffuses goodness in things because He is good." (la, q. 13, a. 2). The *mode* in which these perfections exist in God, we express either *negatively,* as when we speak of unlimited goodness, or else in an *eminent sense* (relatively), as when we speak of sovereign goodness. Hence we do not positively know *in what* precisely the mode *consists intrinsically* according to which these perfections are predicated of God; we possess but a negative and

19 See *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique,* article *"Agnosticisme,"* cols. 38, 66.

relative knowledge of this mode, and in this sense we can truthfully say that we cannot know *what God is {prout est in se seu quidditative).* It is only by means of the *common concepts* of analogy that we can acquire a knowledge of God (cfr. Cajetan, *In lam,* q. 39, a. 1). Similarly, theodicy can never define the divine intellect, the divine will, the divine movement, *as they are in themselves;* it can conclude *that* intellect, will, and causality belong to God, but it cannot give us any other than a negative or relative knowledge of the divine mode of these attributes.[20]

Moreover, the created and human mode will enter into the propositions which we shall formulate concerning God, so that when absolute perfections are attributed to Him, the attribution itself will be formal, but not so the *mode* of attribution. St. Thomas says in the *Contra Gentes* (Bk. I, ch. 30) : "Names of this kind can be both affirmed and denied of God: affirmed on account of what the name signifies (formal reason); denied because of the mode of its signification (created mode)." In fact, he adds, "since our intellect derives its ideas through the senses, it either conceives of a thing and designates it in the abstract (as goodness), and then the thing signified is simple, but not subsisting; or else it thinks of a tiling and designates it in the concrete (individual good), and then the thing signified is subsisting, but not simple. Such is the mode of created things, whereas that which pertains to God is both simple and subsisting. Hence there is always an element of imperfection in the *mode* in which we speak of God; when we have stated that He is good, we add that He is goodness itself, subsisting goodness, not goodness in the abstract; likewise, having asserted that He exists, we add that it is not that He *has* existence, but that He *is* existence, subsisting existence, *ipsum esse subsistens."* (Cfr. *Contra Gentes, ibid.).*

Such is the knowledge that human reason, when left to its own

20 Sec Zigliara, *Summa Phil.,* Vol. II, p. 488.

resources, can acquire of God. It knows that He exists and has some idea of His essence, but it does not know Him *as He is in Himself* (in what properly constitutes Him as God). In a similar manner we know our friends, but we do not fully enter into their sentiments, *such as they are in themselves.*

33) *Solution of the objections raised against the transcendental validity of primary notions.*

Marcel Hébert, in an article entitled *"Anonyme et Polyonyme,"* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* 1903, p. 241, proposed the following objection against the doctrine which we have just presented: "This doctrine of analogy presupposes that we admit the fact of a 'causal connection' between God and the world: between a God who, as a perfect substance, creates a world of imperfect substances, which participate in varying degrees in His infinite perfection. But this causal connection is itself an analogy. The theologians say that God is the 'analogical cause' of the world. Now all these analogies are based on a primary analogy, and the only way in which the theologians avoid what is known as begging the question, is by assuming the fact of creation as certain on other grounds. That we have the certainty of *faith* on this head is irrelevant to the point in dispute, since we are here concerned only with that certitude which is acquired by *reasoning.* Now, what has reason to say about this fundamental problem? We know quite well that it is not content with a series of phenomena, but demands an absolute *raison d'être;* it does not, however, in any way demand that there should be a realization of this absolute in any 'particular substance,' transcendent by reason of its relation to the essence of things."

Thus M. Hébert, like the Abbé Le Roy, admits that the principle of causality, leading to an extrinsic cause (whatever is set in motion, is set in motion by another), "derives its apparent

lucidity from a spatial image which has been introduced surreptitiously into a metaphysical problem; it supposes that movers and things movable are distinct substances (so-called postulate of morcellation), which is denied by Pantheism." [21] "We cannot, without having recourse to anthropomorphism, introduce the idea of causality in the psychological sense, and besides, this would simply result in the admission of a world-soul." [22]

We answered this objection, though not completely, when we showed that the sufficient reason for the existence of a contingent being must be an actualizing or *realizing* sufficient reason. This is the principle of causality, in no sense anthropomorphic, of which we make use in proving the existence of God. It abstracts from every particular image derived either from external experience (postulate of morcellation), or from internal experience (psychological causality); it is conceived as a function of *being,* which is the formal object of die human intellect, considered not as *human,* but as *intellect* (for the proper object of the human intellect *qua human* is the essence of sensible things, and not *being').* Hence anthropomorphism is out of the question. Moreover, as we have already remarked, it matters not whether the world from which we start to prove the existence of God is a single substance, or a number of substances, provided only we can say of it that it has *multiplicity* and *becoming.* From what we know of the principles of identity and of sufficient reason we must say that the world has not its *raison d'etre* within itself, that it is contingent, and that for a reality to be its own sufficient reason, it must be in every respect identical with itself, that it must be to *being* as A is to A; in other words it must be *Being itself (ipsum esse),* pure actuality, and hence essentially distinct from the world, which is multiplex and changing. To deny this would be to deny that the principle of identity is the fundamen-

21 *Rev. de Met. et de Mor.,* July, 1902, pp. 398 ff.: *"La dernière idole."*
22 *Ibid.*

tai law of reality as well as of thought, and to admit with Hegel that the fundamental law is contradictory or absurd. A world-soul, one in substance and multiple in the phenomena by which it is determined, would be contingent. From the very fact that it is capable of receiving a multiplicity and variety of modes, it follows that it is not pure identity, pure being, absolute perfection; the *very principle of identity itself* demands that it have a cause, since it is by nature composite; for elements in themselves different cannot of themselves be united. It is not here a question of any veiled reference to the argument of St. Anselm, but simply a matter of appealing to the supreme principle which governs thought.

There is a more serious difficulty than the one presented by Hébert, namely, that we cannot positively apply to God the analogical concept of *being* (and affirm the existence of God), except by assuming that the concept of *cause* is one of transcendental validity; but this assumption is not only gratuitous, it is also unwarranted: for the transcendental validity of the concept of *cause,* far from being able to establish the ontological validity of the concept of *being,* presupposes the latter, since *being* is the most universal of all concepts and implied in every other.

The objection, when cast into syllogistic form, reads something like this: The transcendental validity of the most universal ideas cannot, without begging the question, be based upon the validity of an idea that is less universal in extent. Now, in the preceding proofs the transcendental validity of the most universal concepts *{being,* unity, truth, etc.) is based upon the validity of the less universal concept of cause. Therefore, the transcendental validity of the most universal concepts of *being,* truth, unity, etc., is without sufficient foundation.

For the sake of brevity and clearness, we will give a formal answer. We distinguish the major as follows: we admit that, considered in the abstract, the most universal of concepts do not

depend for their transcendental validity upon that of a less universal concept; relatively to us, however, it is a different matter. St. Thomas declares that the proposition, "God exists," considered in itself, is self-evident, but not so for us *(est per se nota quoad se, non quoad nos;* la, q. 2, a. 1). The sun, for instance, is a source of light in itself, but not so for the owl, whose vision is so feeble that it can only see at night.

So far as we are concerned, I draw another distinction: that the most universal of concepts cannot depend for their transcendental validity upon that of a concept less universal in extent is true in the sense *that there is nothing these concepts in themselves denote, which prevents their being attributed;* but if it be a question of the *actual attribution* of such concepts, then the reverse is true, if the less universal concept is essentially *relative* to the world of which we have *direct* knowledge, and by means of which we rise to a knowledge of hitherto unknown things of a higher order. Now this is precisely the case with the concept of cause, for in direct contrast with the most universal concepts of *being,* unity, etc., which are absolute, that of cause is essentially relative, referring to the effect produced.[23]

That is why we proved first of all that there is nothing which the most universal concepts of *being,* unity, truth, goodness, in themselves denote that would render it impossible for an infinitely perfect being, if such a one exists, to be expressed by these concepts, because they represent absolute and analogical perfections, and from this point of view the notion of *being* is prior to that of *cause.* But the *actual attribution* of these perfections to God, for us, rests upon this principle: that the world demands a first cause possessing these perfections. Just as the necessity of a first cause, too, depends in its final analysis upon the analogous concept of *being,* just as the principle of causality re-

23 Cfr. *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 13, a. 7: "Whether names which imply relation to creatures, are predicated of God *ex tempore?"*

fers indirectly to the principle of contradiction, so the concept of cause, not being absolute, but relative to the world which is caused, may serve as the connecting link between the lower and the higher, that is, between the finite which is directly known, and the infinite which we are striving to know.

If we wish to consider the further question, how the concepts of *being* and cause are inter-related, and why it is that *being* holds the first place, we must bear in mind that there are five stages in the process of human knowledge, (i) For us the concept of *being* denotes a perfection without any admixture of imperfection; it is an analogical concept, which means that it is capable of existing according to essentially different modes, and from this point of view an infinite mode is not beyond the scope of *being.* (2) Since the notion of *cause* is closely associated with that of *being,* we conceive of it as a perfection without admixture of imperfection and one that is analogical. In fact, causality is defined as a *realization.* Now, there is nothing of imperfection implied in the notion that something is realized or comes into existence; besides, there is nothing to prevent this perfection of *being,* which is realized in the present order of things in different modes, from accommodating itself to an infinite mode of being. (3) All the finite realities of which we have knowledge, in the multiplicity and *becoming* that they imply, appear to us as contingent, and hence of necessity *demand* an actualizing *raison d'être* or a *cause.* This exigency, expressed by the principle of causality, is itself based upon *being,* just as the latter principle depends upon that of contradiction or identity. The contingent being, since it is not unconditioned, can exist only through or by something else, which means that it demands a cause. The concept of cause being essentially *relative,* enables us to transcend the finite order of things. That which is finite, composite, and subject to change cannot of itself explain its actuality, and hence its cause must be sought in something outside of it and above

it. Here again it is the concept of *being* upon which the principle of causality ultimately rests, and which, in conjunction with that of cause, forces us to rise above the world in seeking the *raison d'être* of its existence. (4) By the very fact that finite beings are composite and subject to change, the cause which they postulate must itself be free from composition and change, otherwise the cause would demand another cause of a higher order. Hence we must conclude that this cause is absolutely simple and immutable, that it is *pure being.* In this way we arrive at the supreme analogue of *being,* and by a negative and relative process we determine die non-finite and eminent mode of being by which God is constituted essentially distinct from the world. (5) Finally, starting not from the notion of being in general (analogous concept), but from the Divine Being (supreme analogue), we negatively and relatively determine the mode of the divine causality (the supreme analogue), and perceive that this dominating causality is *pure cause,* not caused, not pre-moved, that it is its own activity, its own action, and transcends time, and consequently is the cause of time as well as of movement, of which it is the measure, though always retaining its freedom of action. Thus the demands of *being* in general prepare the way for the transcendental application of the principle of causality, and by this means the mind acquires its knowledge of the supreme analogue of being, which, in turn, enables us to determine, though in an imperfect manner, the mode of the divine causality. In this way *being* retains its primacy in the order of invention *(in via inventionis'),* and also in the order of judgment by means of the ultimate causes of things *(in via judicii).*[24]

We have already remarked (no. 23), that what the mind first of all acquires is a confused concept of *being* before that of the mode of *being or of* the phenomenon. By means of this latter

24 Concerning the ascending and descending order in the process of reasoning, consult St. Thomas, la, q. 79, art. 8 and 9.

concept the confused concept of *being* becomes more clearly defined; *being* is conceived as a substance, and the notion of substance thus acquired, acts as a searchlight and clarifies the concept of the mode of *being,* of accident, or of the phenomenon.[28]

Thus the primacy of *being* is assured and continues to be the objective light of our intellect, causality being subordinate to *being* as one of its modes.

Objection. But to attribute causality to a God who transcends the world seems to be inconceivable, or at least dubious (fourth antimony of Kant). In fact, such attribution necessitates that God be the absolutely immobile first cause. Now, an immobile first cause which, though not being the principle of its action, would produce effects that would begin to exist, is inconceivable. Therefore, the attribution of causality to a God who transcends the world is inconceivable.

Reply. I distinguish the major as follows: that it is necessary to admit God to be the absolutely immobile first cause, of which we shall have *positive* knowledge, both as to what is formally implied in the concept of cause, and as to the divine mode of causality—this I deny; that we shall have *positive* knowledge of what is formally implied in the concept of cause, but that we shall have only a *negative* and *relative* knowledge of the divine mode of such causality—this I concede. But it is precisely this imperfect knowledge of the mode of the divine causality which renders the problem so mysterious. We may say that no *positive* concept can be formed of the mode of this causality, but we speak of it in negative and relative terms, as when we say that it is an uncaused cause, or that it is a cause which, by reason of its eminence, transcends time, of which it is the cause as well as of movement, though still retaining its freedom of action. (See no. 36, proof of the existence of God by the argument from motion).

28 See St. Thomas, Ia, q. 85, art. 3 and 5.

Objection. But even if it be granted that the relative concept of cause is a sufficient basis for the acual attribution of absolute concepts, it does not seem possible that these same concepts, considered in themselves, can be predicated of a transcendental God. In fact, God, if He is transcendental and infinite, differs from the creature in a far greater measure than the creature differs from nothingness. Now, between the creature and nothingness there is no analogy. With far more reason, therefore, must this be the case between a transcendental and infinite God and the creature. The major of this objection is undeniable. The distance which separates the creature from nothingness is but negatively infinite, since one of the terms is negative, thus enabling creative power to bridge the gulf. Between the creature and God, on the contrary, there is a positively infinite distance, since both terms are positive, and hence absolutely unapproachable. That omnipotence itself could transform or transubstantiate a creature into God, is inconceivable.

Reply. As in the answer to the preceding objection, we distinguish the major as follows: That a transcendental and infinite God differs in a far greater measure from the creature, than the creature differs from nothingness—this I admit, if we consider God and the creature according to their respective *modes of being,* for one of these modes is infinite, whereas the other is finite; but if we consider *being according to its formal aspect,* then the proposition must be denied; for this formal aspect is verified both in the creature and in the transcendental cause which it postulates, not, however, in nothingness.

Objection. But under this formal aspect *being,* compared with God, takes precedence of Him and is more universal than He. Now, nothing can take precedence of God. Hence the reply is unconvincing, and the difficulty remains.

Reply. Being in its formal aspect has a priority that is *logical* with reference to God and is logically more universal than He,

according to our imperfect mode of conception. But it has no *real* priority, nor any universality of the real order of containment and causality.26 Since our knowledge is abstracted from sensible things, we conceive of *being* in general and the analogue, before we come to know the supreme analogue or primary Being. But when we realize that this latter is the self-subsistent Being, infinite plenitude of being, capable of producing everything than can possibly exist, then we see clearly that *being* abstracted from sensible things is truly subsequent to primary Being.

Objection. Nevertheless, if we consider the absolute perfections, not as isolated, by themselves, but as interrelated, their coexistence does not seem possible in one and the same transcendental being. In fact, if they exist *formally* in God, they posit in Him a real-formal multiplicity which is incompatible with His absolute simplicity. If, on the other hand, *they are identified* eminently in the Deity, they are formally destructive of each other, and have *but a virtual existence* after the manner of mixed perfections. Then the statement, "God is good," can have but one meaning, namely, that God is the cause of goodness. This brings us back to the opinion of Maimonides. And as God is the cause of bodily things, we could just as well affirm of Him that He is corporeal, as to say that He remains unknowable.

Such is the general antinomy of the one and the multiple, with which reason clashes whenever it seeks to attribute the primary notions to God. The multiplicity of the absolute perfections attributed to God, not only virtually, but formally, seems to destroy the divine simplicity, or conversely, to be destroyed by it.

Apart from this general antinomy, other difficulties present themselves. How, for instance, can we reconcile (a) the divine simplicity with that duality of subject and object which is an essential condition of knowledge; (b) the free act of God, which

26 Sec Billuart, *De Deo,* dissert. V, art. II, § n.

would seem to imply something contingent and defectible, with His absolute immutability; (c) the divine life, which seems to imply a process of becoming, with that same absolute immutability; (d) the permission of evil with God's supreme goodness and omnipotence; (e) infinite mercy with absolute justice?

Reply. We must postpone the solution of these difficulties concerning the reconciliation of the divine attributes until the proofs have been given for God's existence. These proofs will be sufficiently established by defending the twofold validity, ontological and transcendental, of primary ideas in general, and of each one in particular, especially those of *being* and cause. After we have proved the existence of a primary cause which transcends the created universe, after we have shown that this cause must be the *selj-subsistent Being,* and deduced the principal attributes of that Being, we shall be able to explain why there can be no conflict between the various attributes, and thus resolve the alleged antinomies.

Having established the fact of the demonstrability of the existence of God, we now pass on to the demonstration itself.

CHAPTER III

EXPOSÉ OF THE PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

To grasp the profound meaning and the metaphysical import of the traditional proofs for the existence of God, we cannot do better than study them as set forth in the third article of the second question of Part I of the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas, where that learned philosopher and theologian reduces these proofs to their essential principles. See also *Contra Gentes,* Bk. I, cc. 13, 15,16, 44; Bk. II, c. 15; Bk. Ill, c. 44; *De Veritate,* q. 5, a. 2; *De Potentia,* q. 3, a. 5; *Compendium Theologiae,* c. 3; *Physica,* Bk. VII, Leet. 2; Bk. VIII, Leet. 9 ff.; *Metaphysica,* Bk. XII, Leet. 5 ff.

Our purpose here is not historical, but merely to show that these proofs are closely connected with the first principles of reason, especially with the principle of non-contradiction or identity, and with the first of all human ideas, namely, that of *being.*

The two objections with which St. Thomas opens the above-mentioned article of the *Summa Theologica* are sufficient evidence that he was aware of the difficulties of the problem. They are the fundamental objections to which all others can easily be reduced. The first objection voices the opinion of the Pessimists; the second that of the Pantheists.

i. *The first objection* may be expressed briefly as follows: Evil exists; therefore an infinitely good God does not exist. For if He did exist, how could one account for all those defects, sufferings, and disorders in His work? This objection has been developed at great length by Schopenhauer. To say with Voltaire

(Third Letter to Memmius), with John Stuart Mill *(Essays on Religion,* p. 163), with *J. G.* Schiller (cfr. *Revue de Philosophie,* 1906, p. 653), and with several contemporary authors, that it is a question of a finite God, *very* wise and *very* powerful, but *not omnipotent,* does not leave us so much as the nominal definition of God which determines the object itself of our proof.[1]

The solution of this difficulty belongs to the treatise on Providence (1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2um), and we shall recur to it when we come to consider the harmonization of the divine attributes. For the present it is enough to indicate the answer of Catholic theology. St. Augustine has condensed it into a few words, which are quoted by St. Thomas: "If evil exists, it is not because God lacks power or goodness, but, on the contrary, He permits evil only because He is powerful enough and good enough to bring good out of evil *("Nullo modo sineret aliquid mali esse in operibus suis, nisi esset adeo omnipotens et bonus ut bene faceret etiam de malo." Enchiridion,* ch. 2). In the presence of evil we see the triumph of the omnipotence and infinite goodness of God. He allows the death of the gazelle in order that the lion may live, and causes persecutions and the greatest of sufferings to redound to the glory of His martyrs. Not only does He enable souls to triumph over suffering, but He strengthens them by means of it, inspires them to become ever more serious of purpose and to attach themselves only to the things that are eternal. He purifies them by adversity and by the humiliations that He sends them. He protects them against pride or cures them of it. Moreover, physical evil is as nothing in comparison with moral evil or sin; and how could this latter make it impossible for Sovereign Goodness to exist, since sin presupposes it? In matter of fact, there is but one offence against God, which, like physical evil, He has permitted only in view of a greater good. It is our misery, which

1 For the development of this objection see *Le Divin: Expériences et Hypothèses,* by Marcel Hébert, Paris, 1907, pp. 148-164.

enables God to be merciful, just as creative power postulates absolute nothingness (1a, q. 21, a. 3). The redemption, effected by the Incarnation of the Son of God, has made it possible for us to say *"felix culpa."* As for moral evil, which refuses to cooperate in what is good, it is compelled to do so by the chastisements which it calls down, by the manifestation both of Divine Justice and of the inalienable rights of Goodness, and it enables God to show Himself in all His majesty as the Judge (1a, q. 25, a. 5, ad 3um). The small catechisms simply say: "There will be a general judgement, in order that all the good deeds and all the sins of men may be made known, and that all men may *recognize the justice of God* in rewarding the good and *punishing the tvicked."* (See *infra,* no. 65, B).

Such is the Catholic answer to the problem of evil. In proving the existence of God, the theologian is well aware of the difficulties upon which the Pessimists insist; nay, he even foresees others. Far from stopping, as Voltaire did, at such disasters as the Lisbon earthquake, the theologian foresees that he will have to explain the rigors of Divine Justice by the very exigencies of the Sovereign Good. We shall return to this problem of evil in Part II, chs. 2, 3, and of this book.

2. *The second objection* mentioned by St. Thomas is against the existence of God. It is said by the Pantheists that it is sufficient to admit two principles, nature and spirit; an eternal principle is not necessary, for: *"Quod potest compleri per pauciora principia, non fit per plura."* To claim, therefore, as Hebert does,[2] that St. Thomas did not know Pantheism, or chose to ignore it, is beside the question. It is certain that St. Thomas was aware of the two general types of Pantheism—that which reduces the multiple to one, *becoming* to *being,* and must end in denying the existence of the world *(Acosmism),* commonly attributed to Parmenides *{Met.,* I, Leet. 9 of St. Thomas; *Phys.,* Bk. I, Leet. 3,

[2] *"La Dernière Idole,"* in *Revue de Métaphysique el de Morale,* July, 1902.

4, 5 and 14); and that which, on the contrary, reduces everything to *becoming,* and inevitably results in a denial of the existence of God. This is atheistic *Evolutionism,* which is based upon Heraclitean principles *(Met.,* Bk. I, Leet. 4). St. Thomas did not fail to see that Pantheism, in a certain sense, never existed, because it is absurd. Either the world is absorbed by God (Acosmism), or God is absorbed by the world and hence does not exist (Atheism). Against the Materialistic Pantheism of David of Dinant see *Sent.,* II, dist. 17, q. 1, a. 1, and the *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 3, a. 8: "Whether God enters into the composition of other things?" In the la, q. 76, a. 2 (see Cajetan's Commentary), and question 79, a. 5, as well as in the treatise entitled *De Unitate Intellectus,* we find the refutation of Averroism, which admitted but one intellect for all human beings.

The following proofs contain the solution of this Pantheistic objection.

34) *The five main proofs. Their universality. Their order. What they are intended to demonstrate.*

Before entering upon the classical proofs, it will be useful to determine the degree of their universality, to explain the order in which St. Thomas presents them, and to state precisely what each proof is intended to demonstrate.

These five arguments are typical and universal in range. All others can be reduced to them. They may truly be called metaphysical, for they are based on the highest metaphysical principles *(ex summis metaphysicae fontibus sumuntur),* in this sense that *any created being whatever* can be taken as the starting-point in the argument, ranging from stone to angel and ending in those five attributes which can be predicated only of that Being that subsists above all—*Ipsum esse subsistens, subsistent Being itself,* whence flow all the divine attributes. These five proofs are deduced from the laws of created being, viewed not inas-

much as they may happen to be of the sensible or of the spiritual order, but inasmuch as they are created. Every created being is mobile, caused, contingent, composite, imperfect, and relative. St. Thomas preferred to select his examples from the objects of sense perception, but he also applied these same proofs to purely spiritual things, to the soul and its intellectual and volitional movements. (See his answer to the second objection in the article just quoted; also la, q. 79, a. 4, and la IIae, q. 9, a. 4). Following the example of Aristotle, all treatises on general metaphysics or ontology, devoted to *being* as such, study the opposition between being moved and unmoved, conditioned and unconditioned, contingent and necessary; between *being* that is composite and imperfect and *being* that is simple and perfect; between relative and absolute *being*. St. Thomas here considers every created *being* (1) as subject to change; (2) as caused; (3) as contingent; (4) as composite and imperfect; (5) as multiplicity of design directed to some end. From these he concludes that there is a being which is (1) not moved; (2) not caused; (3) necessary; (4) simple and perfect; (5) directing all things to their proper end—which cannot be other than the Self-subsisting Being that is above all things, the *"Ipsum esse subsistens"* (la, q. 3, a. 4).

The general arrangement of these arguments, both with regard to their premises and their conclusions, must be carefully noted.

Since God is known by His works *("per ea quae facta sunt")* St. Thomas first of all presents the most evident signs of contingency in the world; for that which did not exist, and suddenly comes into being, is obviously contingent. The most striking example is that of a body which passes from a state of repose to a state of movement. It is evident that such a body does not set itself in motion. From local movement we may pass on to qualitative movement (gradual intensification of a quality such as heat and light), to accelerated movement, in fact, to all kinds of *becoming,* even

that form of it which is found in the intellect and the will and which exists in every finite mind. A thought, a volition arises in consciousness which was previously non-existent. Clearly it does not come into existence by itself, nor does the soul possess it by its own power.

It has been asserted that this first proof given by St. Thomas applies only to movements of the physical order, especially to local movement.[3] As a matter of fact, local motion is merely given as the most striking example of movement in the sensible order. To be convinced of this, one has only to read the article in the *Summa Theologica* entitled: "Whether God works in every agent?" in which St. Thomas presents this argument from motion, referring to God as die first cause. He writes: "The first agent moves the second to act. And thus all agents act by virtue of God Himself. . . . God moves things by applying, as it were, their forms and powers to operation." (la, q. 105, a. 5). In three other passages, to which we have had occasion to refer previously, (la, q. 2, a. 3, ad 211m; la, q. 79, a. 4; la, IIae, q. 9, a. 4), the proof from motion is expressly applied to movements of the intellect and the will.

This first argument is designed to establish the fact of a *source of becoming,* of a first mover who is immovable, in this sense that he possesses within Himself the source of His own activity and has no need of being moved by another. Thence may be deduced: the pure actuality of the first mover (la, q. 3, a. 1 and 2); His aseity *(jbid.,* a. 4); His absolute immutability. (la, q. 9, a. i and 2); His eternity (la, q. 10, a. 2), etc.

St. Thomas could have established by an *a priori* proof that the first mover must be the first efficient cause, *the source, not only of becoming, but also of being.* He preferred to give an *a posteriori* proof of this, and the second proof is based, not upon the dependence of *becoming* on the force which previously set it

[3] See Chossat in the *Diet, de Théologie Calh.,* art. *"Dieu,"* cols. 931-934.

in motion, but on that of *being* (which is the permanently abiding terminus of becoming) with respect to efficient causes which not only produce it, but conserve it in being. If we wish to grasp the full force of this argument, we must read the two articles in which St. Thomas discusses this question from the opposite point of view. In the first of these (Ia, q. 104, a. 1), "Whether creatures need to be kept in being by God?" he distinguishes clearly between *being* and *becoming,* between *fieri* and *esse.* The second article is entitled, "Whether God preserves every creature immediately?" and arrives at the conclusion that there is a first cause, the source of *being,* which is not itself the effect of any cause, nor preserved in its *being* by any higher cause. From this follow the Prime Mover's aseity (Ia, q. 3, a. 4), creative omnipotence (Ia, q. 25, a. 3; q. 44, a. 1 and 2; q. 45, a. 2 and 5), immensity and ubiquity (Ia, q. 8, a. 2), etc.

St. Thomas could have proved *a priori* that the first mover and the first cause must be the *necessary being.* But he proved *a posteriori* the existence of a necessary being by a third argument, which starts out, not from the dependence of *becoming* or *being* on their respective causes, but from the possibility of the nonexistence of a being which is caused; in other words, its *contingency.* Thus this proof is more general than the preceding ones, for it can be applied not only to *becoming,* not only to *being* which did not previously exist, but to everything which has not its sufficient cause in itself. St. Thomas particularly insists on the evidence of the senses attesting to the contingency of material things; but his point of departure is more universal, namely, the basic proposition that what can just as well not be, must have for its cause a necessary being *("quod possibile est non esse pendet a necessario").* This third proof, universal in its scope, concludes merely to the existence of a *necessary being,* which exists of and by itself *(a se).* From this fact *(aseitas)* we argue that

such a being is self-subsistent, or Being itself (Ia, q. 3, a. 4), whence all the absolute perfections can be deduced.

The fourth way seeks for a sign of contingency in the ultimate profundities of created being. Here we find ourselves placed in the static order, confronted with beings which we do not necessarily need to have seen coming into existence or ceasing to exist. To detect their contingency, we have recourse to something which, on first consideration, appears not so convincing, but is more profound and more universal than movement, generation or corruption, namely, *multiplicity, composition,* and *imperfection.* The multiple, the composite, the imperfect—all demand a cause just as well as *becoming* does; and this cause must be not only uncaused, but *unique,* absolutely *simple,* and absolutely *perfect.* From this we conclude that God is not corporeal (Ia, q. 3, a. 1), that He is not composed of essence and existence, but that He is the self-subsistent Being at the head of creation (Ia, q. 3, a. 4); that He is not included in any genus (Ia, q. 3, a. 5); that He is sovereign goodness (q. 6, a. 2); that He is infinite (q. 7, a. 1); that He is the sovereign truth (q. 16, a. 5); that He is invisible and incomprehensible (Ia, q. 12, a. 4 and 8). The proof based on the eternal verities which concludes the existence of a Supreme Truth, as well as those derived from the notions of absolute goodness and of the compelling force of what is upright and good, enable us to conclude to the existence of that Supreme Good, which is the source of all happiness and the foundation of all *becoming,* are but variations of the fourth way.

The fifth proof emphasizes the preceding fourth. It is based upon the notion of multiplicity—not of any sort of multiplicity, but of that which gives evidence of design. In other words, the argument derives its force from the idea of the *orderly arrangement of things in the world.* It establishes as its conclusion, not a unity of some kind or other, but a *unity of conception,* which

means that there is an *intelligent designer.* This argument applies to every being in which there is a trace of design: whether it be a case of essence designed for existence, or of intelligence ordained to its proper act *{potentia dicitur ad actum).* Since the existence of a first cause has already been proved, the fifth proof reveals this cause to us as a Supreme Intelligence. From this intelligence, considered as an attribute of the self-subsisting Being (la, q. 14, a. 1), we conclude to the Wisdom and Foreknowledge (la, q. 14), the Will (q. 19), and the Providence (la, q. 22) of that same Being. This last and more popular proof, which seems to be simpler than the preceding one, in reality presupposes it, and of all the proofs for the existence of God is perhaps the one which, considered strictly on metaphysical grounds, presents the greatest difficulty in being referred back to the first principles of reason, on account of its complexity. It is probably on this account that St. Thomas put it in the last place.

Briefly, then, and in a general way, we may say that the contingent (that which, by its definition, may either exist or not exist), demands a necessary being (third proof); that movement, which is the simplest example of contingency, demands an unmoved mover (first proof) ; that conditioned *being* demands an unconditioned *being* (second proof) ; that the multiple presupposes the one, the composite the simple, and the simple and imperfect presuppose the perfect (fourth proof); that a multiplicity of design postulates an intelligent designer (fifth proof). Now the necessary *being,* the first mover, the first cause, which is absolutely one, simple, perfect, and intelligent, is that *being* which corresponds to the idea that comes to the mind when one utters the word *God* (nominal definition). Therefore, God exists.

From any one of these five divine attributes we may establish the reality of that *Being* whose essence is identical with His existence, and who for this reason is Being Itself (la, q. 3, a. 4).

The proof for God's existence is thereby firmly established. The *nature* of God is all that remains for us to study, and *Self-Subsisting Being* becomes the principle from which we can deduce the divine attributes. Thus we shall see, as Fr. del Prado, O.P., shows in his treatise *De Veritate Fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae** that the supreme truth, not in the analytical order or the order of invention,[5] but in the synthetic or deductive order, that truth which is the final answer to our questions concerning God and die world, is the identity of essence and existence to be found in God alone. *"In solo Deo essentia et esse sunt idem,"* whence the definition of God expressed in His own words: *"I am He who is."*

This will be the last word in reply to such ultimate metaphysical questions as: Why is there but one being who is uncreated, immutable, infinite, absolutely perfect, sovereignly good, omniscient, free to create, etc.? Why did all die odier beings have to receive from Him all that they are, and why must they expect from Him all that they desire and may become? The treatise on God thus rests fundamentally on the proposition that *"In solo Deo essentia et esse sunt idem:* in God alone are essence and existence identical." This same proposition is the terminus in the inductive order of metaphysical reasoning, by which we conclude to God's existence, and it is also the principle from which, by the method of deduction, we arrive at the same conclusion.

35) *General proof, which includes all the others. Its principle is that the greater cannot proceed from the less. Fhe higher alone explains the lower.*

Before examining each of these five typical proofs in detail, we shall give a general proof which includes all the others, and

4 Fribourg in Switzerland, 1911.

5 See la, q.79, a.9. "For by *way of finding,* we come through knowledge of temporal things to that of things eternal; but by *way of judgment,* from eternal tilings already known we judge of temporal things."

which, we believe, most aptly illustrates what is commonly accepted as the essential point in establishing the existence of God. The principle of this general proof, *i. e.,* that "The greater cannot proceed from the less," condenses into one formula the principles upon which our five typical proofs are based. These principles may be stated as follows: *"Becoming* depends upon *being* which is determined;" "Conditioned *being* depends upon unconditioned *being;"* "Contingent *being* depends upon necessary *being;"* "Imperfect, composite, multiple *being* depends upon that which is perfect, simple, and one;" "Order in the universe depends upon an intelligent designer." The principles of the first three proofs especially emphasize the fact that the world depends for its existence upon a *cause,* while the last two principles stress the *superiority* and *perfection* of this cause. These may then all be summed up in the formula that "The greater cannot proceed from the less; only the higher grade of *being* explains the lower."

This general proof will have to be scientifically established by the five other proofs. Though it is in itself somewhat vague, it becomes strong and convincing when united with the others. We have here a concrete case of what the theologians teach about the natural knowledge of God. "Although the existence of God needs to be demonstrated," writes Scheeben *(Dogmati^,* II, n. 29), "it does not follow that its certainty is merely the result of a scientific proof, one of conscious reflection, based on our own research or on the teaching of others; nor does it follow that this certainty is due to the scientific accuracy of the proof. On the contrary, the proof required so that anyone may arrive at complete certainty is so easy and so clear that one scarcely perceives the logical process which it involves, and that the scientifically developed proofs, far from being the means by which man first acquires certainty of the existence of God, merely clarify and confirm the knowledge which he already has. Moreover, since the proof, in its original form, presents itself more or less as an

ocular demonstration, and finds an echo in the most hidden recesses of the rational nature of man, it establishes a conviction on this basis which is firmer and less open to attack than any other, no matter how ingeniously contrived, and cannot be assailed by any scientific objection." Thus are verified the words of Scripture when it chides the pagans, not for having neglected the studies necessary for acquiring a knowledge of God, but for having violently suppressed the divine truth clearly made known to the mind of man. (Rom. I, 18; II, 14). To deny the existence of God is an insult to nature (μάταιοι φύσει; Wisd. XIII, 1) as well as to reason ("*Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus;* Ps. XIII).

This general proof may be stated as follows, by ascending from the lower beings up to man:

We know from experience that there are beings and events belonging to different orders. Certain things in nature are inanimate (minerals); and there is the vegetative life (in plants), the sensitive life (in animals), and the intellectual and moral life (in man). All these things come into existence and disappear again, they are born and they die, which shows that their activity has a beginning and an end. Evidently they do not exist of and by themselves. What, then, causes them to come into being?

If there are things in existence at present, there must have been some thing in existence always. "If at any particular moment of time nothing exists, then nothing will ever come into existence." *"Ex nihilo nihil fit."* The principle of causality tells us that nothing cannot be the reason or cause of actual being. To say that the series of perishable things had or did not have a beginning, does not solve the problem. If the series is eternal, it remains eternally insufficient; for the perishable beings of the past were just as indigent as those now existing, and not in any sense self-sufficient. How could any one of them, not being able

to account for its own existence, account for those that follow? This would be the same as admitting that the greater proceeds from the less. We must admit, therefore, that above perishable beings there is a *First Being,* who owes existence only to Himself and can give it to others. (General Proof based on the fact of contingency; see n. 38).

If living beings exist to-day, and if life is superior to brute matter, it could not have evolved from the latter, for to assert this would mean that the greater comes from the less, or, what amounts to the same, that *being* comes from nothing. Just as *being,* as such, cannot come from nothing, living being cannot proceed from that which is non-living and of a lower order than life. The First Being must, therefore, have life (n. 49). This necessary conclusion becomes practically evident to the senses if we suppose that it is an established fact of positive science that the series of living beings had a beginning.

If there is such a thing in the world to-day as intelligence and knowledge; if intelligence is superior to brute matter, to the vegetative and the sensitive life; if the most domesticated of animals can never be trained so as to grasp the principle of sufficient reason or the first principle of the moral law: intelligence could never have evolved from these lower grades of being, but it is necessary to admit an intelligent being existing from all eternity. The intellectuality of this being cannot be, like ours, contingent; for, not being responsible for its own existence, how could it account for that of others? This means that the First Being is of necessity *intelligent.* If everything originated from matter, from a lump of clay, how could human reason, or the mind of man, have evolved? "There is no greater absurdity than to admit that intelligent beings are the result of a blind and material fatalism," says Montesquieu (proof based on the contingency of mind; see *infra,* n. 39, b). And how could there be

order in the world without an intelligent designer? (proof from the evidence of order in the world; *infra* n. 40).

If the series of rational principles, which dominate our reason and all reality, actual as well as possible, are necessary, and consequently *superior* and anterior to all contingent intellects and realities which they regulate, then they are independent of the latter, and there must always have been some intelligent being reigning supreme in the realm of the possible, the real, and the intellectual. This supreme intellect must have been in possession of a *first and unchangeable* truth. In other words, if the intelligible and its necessary laws are superior to the unintelligible and the contingent, they must have existed from all eternity, for they could not possibly have originated from that which in no wise contained them (proof based on the eternal truths; *infra* n. 39› c).

If, finally, there are in the world to-day, morality, justice, charity, if we can attribute sanctity to Christ and Christianity, if this morality and diis sanctity are of a higher order than what is neither holy nor moral, there must have been from all eternity a moral, just, good, and holy Being. The soul of a St. Augustine or a St. Vincent de Paul, the humblest of Christians for whom the words of the *Pater 'Noster* have a message to convey—is there anything more absurd than to say that these are the result of a material and blind fatality? Can the desire for God and for perfect holiness be explained apart from God? Can the relative be explained apart from the absolute? (Proof based on the contingency of mind, applied to morality and religion in practice).

If the first principle of the moral law, namely, that we must do good and avoid evil ("Do your duty, let happen what may,") forces itself upon us with no less objectivity and necessity than the principles of speculative reason; if the really good, which is the object of our will (good in itself, superior to useful and

delectable good), has *a right* to be loved and willed apart from the satisfaction and the advantages to be derived from it; if the being capable of such an act of the will *must* so will, in order to retain its *raison d'etre;* if the voice of conscience proclaims this right of the good to be loved, end afterwards approves or condemns, without our being able to stifle the feelings of remorse; if, in a word, the right of good to be loved and practised *dominates* our moral activity and that of societies, actual and possible, just as the principle of identity dominates the real, both actual and possible, then there must have been from all eternity a foundation for these absolute rights. These necessary and dominant rights cannot be explained and regulated by any contingent reality. Since they are above everything except the *Absolute Good,* it is only the latter that can explain their existence. (Proof based on the moral law; n. 39, e). If we are conscious of a moral law within us which is superior to all human legislation, there must be a supreme legislator.

Therefore, there must be a First Being, who is at the same time Life, Intelligence, supreme Truth, absolute Justice, perfect Holiness, and sovereign Goodness. This conclusion is based on the principle that "the greater cannot proceed from the less," which in turn is merely a formulation of the principle of causality, already discussed. *"Quod est non a se, est ab alio quod est a se":* That which has not its reason for existing in itself, must derive that reason from another being, which exists by and for itself (see *supra,* no. 9). The lower grades of being (lifeless matter, the vegetative and sensitive life), far from being able to explain the higher (intelligence), can be explained only by this latter. The simplest of material elements, such as the atom and the crystal, far from being the principle of things, can be explained only by an idea of type or final end. The display in them of intelligent design can have been caused only by an intelligent

designer. The physical sciences, if they have any objective validity, reveal this intelligible law or sufficient reason, but are not the cause of it. (Proof based on the notion of final causes; n. 40).

This general proof shows us the absurdity of Materialistic Evolutionism, based on an antiscientific and antiphilosophical hypothesis. It is antiscientific, because it presupposes the homogeneity of all phenomena, from the physical-chemical up to the most sublime acts of philosophical and religious contemplation. Now, science has nothing to adduce in favor of such a homogeneity; on the contrary, as Dubois-Reymond remarks in his work, *Les Limites de la Science,* science is confronted with seven baffling problems, namely, (1) the nature of matter and of force; (2) the origin of movement; (3) the first appearance of life; (4) the apparent finality of nature; (5) the appearance of sensation and consciousness; (6) the origin of reason and language; (7) free will. This is tantamount to saying that science cannot explain the higher forms of reality by the laws of inanimate matter. Materialistic Evolutionism is also antiphilosophical. Whatever the degree of fecundity and however numerous the qualities which may be ascribed to it, it is always, by its very definition, blind necessity or a blind contingency (absence of intelligence). How could a superior intelligence ever have evolved from it? The physical and chemical laws cannot explain intelligence, but receive their own explanation from it alone.

This general proof also furnishes a virtual refutation of Idealistic Pantheism. The required First Being, who is entirely independent of everything not itself, is also endowed with intellect and will—and these three notes constitute personality. Moreover, we cannot think of ourselves as modes or accidents of this Being, for if the greater cannot proceed from the less, the principle of things must from all eternity possess the plenitude of being, intelligence, truth, and goodness. It is not susceptible of further

perfection, nor can *becoming* be attributed to it, since *becoming* in its final analysis presupposes privation. (See nos. 36, a and 39, a.).

Some Evolutionists (e.*g.,* John Stuart Mill; *supra* n. 12), make bold to affirm that the greater *does* proceed from the less, *being* from nothingness, mind from matter. Hegel sees no difficulty in admitting the same conclusion, since for him the principle of contradiction has no objective significance, and *being* and *non-being* are identical.

Many Positivists (Haeckel, for instance) are inclined to accept the principle that the greater cannot proceed from the less, but deny the superiority of life, sensation, and thought, which they regard as merely the result of physical forces in harmonious combination. Primitive matter, they say, is not only ponderable, inert, and passive, but also ether, which is imponderable matter perpetually in motion. The atom which is attracted by another atom is an example of sensation and inclination in the rudimentary stage; in other words, it is a soul in embryo. The same must be said of molecules, which are composed of two or more atoms, as well as of the far more complex compounds of these molecules. The way in which they combine is purely mechanical; but by reason of this very mechanism the psychic element of things becomes complicated and diversified in accordance with their material elements.[6]

From this point of view, philosophical or religious contemplation is not essentially of a higher order than the functions of the liver or the kidneys. These Materialistic Positivists are forced to conclude that the harmony prevailing in the laws of nature cannot be ascribed to an intelligent cause, but is the result of chance or blind necessity. In defence of their thesis they appeal to the principles of modern physics, especially to the principle of the

8 Sec Haeckel, *The Riddles of the Universe,* ch. XII, and the criticism of this system by E. Boutroux, *Science et Religion,* p. 139.

conservation of energy, which is commonly interpreted as meaning that "nothing is lost and nothing is created." If nothing is lost and nothing is created, then a living, rational being can, strictly speaking, only expend and restore the motive energies received from outside, not only without any quantitative additions, but even without modifying the natural tendencies of these energies by their own spontaneous action; for to change the direction of a force requires force, and we cannot create force. The sum-total of available energy in the universe is fixed, either from all eternity or since the coming into being of things. The intellectual and moral life is but a reflex of the physical life.

In his thesis on *La Contingence des Lois de la Nature* (1874), E. Boutroux replied to this objection by pointing out that the conservation of energy cannot be advanced as a primordial and universal necessity which would explain everything else, since it is itself but a *contingent and partial lato* in need of a cause. "The most elementary and the most general of the physical and chemical laws of nature," he says, "declare what relationships exist between things so heterogeneous that it is impossible to say that the consequent is proportionate to the antecedent and results from it, as the effect from its cause. . . . For us they are merely a series of connected events which we have experienced, and no less contingent than experience itself. . . . The quantity of physical action may increase or decrease in the universe or in parts of the universe." (3rd ed., p. 74). This law of the conservation of energy is not a necessary truth, a supreme law which nature is compelled to obey; itself contingent, it demands a cause. Even if it were a necessary law, like the principle of contradiction, it would not explain the existence of nature, the existence of beings in which it is found, and which may be conceived as not existing. Furthermore, it is but a partial law; man finds it operative in a special sphere, that of physics and chemistry, and even in this inorganic sphere its verification is but approximate. "How

can it be proved that the phenomena observed in physics are not in any way deflected from their own natural course by some superior intervention?" 7 The law is true only of a closed system, removed from all external activities, in which the sum-total of potential and actual energy remains constant; but how can it be proved that the physical universe is a closed system? 8

In the biological field the verification of this law is an impossibility, "for we cannot pass judgment on an infinitely large number of infinitely small forms of life." 8 As for the extension of this law to the domain of the spirit, the hypothesis is not only incapable of verification, but absolutely gratuitous. "Not only is it unnecessary that the world of the spirit should be governed by the same laws which regulate the world of bodies, but since the spiritual is of a different nature from the corporeal, it would be most extraordinary if it did not have its own laws." 10

7 Boutroux, *ibid.,* p. 85.

8 See in the *Revue Thomiste* (Jan., 1905) an article written by the Rev. R. Hedde on "The Two Principles of Thermodynamics." We quote from it the following lines: "The law [of die conservation of energy] is applicable only on the supposition that the universe is a system closed to all external action; *this hypothesis, necessary for the establishment of the law, cannot be the corollary of this law*. If, therefore, spiritual substances intervene in the world of material things, the demonstration of the law will be defective; for we shall be unable to foresee, as far as physics is concerned, the consequences of such an intervention. It seems that certain spiritual philosophers have been entirely wrong in holding that the principle of the conservation of energy constitutes an objection against human freedom. Even if human freedom were able to modify the quantity of total energy in the universe, the physicist would still have the right to proclaim the principle of the conservation of energy, the only one in which he is interested; for what concerns him is not to maintain the constancy of a sum about which he knows nothing, but to know that the phenomena which he studies cannot possibly bring about a variation of the said principle. Therefore, the law no more affects human than it affects divine freedom; the objection is valueless against both forms of freedom." *(Revue Thomiste,* Vol. XII, p. 726. See also *Cursus Philosophiae Thomisticae,* by P. Hugon, O.P., Vol. IV, p. 172; de Munnynck, O.P., *"La Conservation de l'Energie et la Liberté Morale* in *Revue Thomiste,* 1897, pp. 115 ff.; and Sept., 1899, and also *Science et Religion,* a series of pamphlets. Also Fr. Couailhac, S.J., *La Liberte et la Conservation de l'Energie).*

8 Rabier, *Psychologie,* p. 543.

10 Mgr. d'Hulst, *Confer, de Notre-Dame,* 1891, p. 396.

Boutroux in his thesis on the *Contingency of the Laws of Nature*[11] has also established the fact that there is no inherent necessity with regard to the physical and chemical forces of nature, in virtue of which they are bound to produce that combination which results in life, sensation, and intelligence. The actualization of these higher forms of life is contingent, and hence demands a cause different from that demanded by the physical and chemical laws. The universe presents itself to us as a hierarchy of natures, of which the higher forms cannot be conceived as a mere production or development of the lower. Thus the traditionally accepted general proof is confirmed, and has lost nothing of its validity.

We shall now explain more fully and defend scientifically, *i. e.,* with metaphysical arguments, this general proof by means of the five typical proofs as formulated by St. Thomas.

36) *Proof from motion. A. The proof.—B. Objections.—C. Consequences.*

A. The proof. We shall first present this proof in its widest sense (a) by starting from the notion of motion; then we shall apply it to (b) physical motion, and afterwards to (c) spiritual motion. (Concerning this proof, see Aristotle, *Physics,* Bk. VII, Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 1 and 2; Bk. VIII, Leet. 9, 12, 13, 23; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus; Philosophia Naturalis,* q. 24, a. 3, and *Cursus Theologicus, In Iam,* q. 2, a. 3).

a). Taken in its widest sense, this proof claims to establish the existence of a being immovable from every point of view, and, therefore, uncreated; for in the case of every created being there

11 We shall see later on (n. 40) that the laws of nature are *hypothetically necessary.* This thesis of Aristotle avoids the excesses of absolute Determinism and those of Contingentism, which merely rejects necessity in order to rely upon chance or undisciplined freedom. See the end of this work for a discussion of the relations between free will and the *absolutely necessary* principles of reason and being (n. 61).

is at least the transition from non-being to being, which conflicts with the notion of absolute immutability.

The existence of motion or change is the starting-point of the argument, without stating precisely whether the change is substantial or accidental, whether the motion is spiritual or sensible, local, qualitative or by way of augmentation. When arguing against Pantheism it is not at all necessary to assume a plurality of distinct substances, but it suffices to admit the existence of any kind of motion and to study it as motion. Internal and external experience confirms the existence of motion. Zeno declared motion to be impossible, but this declaration was based on the gratuitous and false hypothesis that the continuous is composed of indivisible parts.12

Starting from motion, we gradually arrive at the conclusion that there is an absolutely immovable being, and this by means of two principles: (i) Whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another; (2) in a series of actually and essentially subordinate movers, there is no regress to infinity. Hence we must finally arrive at a first mover which itself is not moved by any kind of motion.

The first proposition, "Whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another," is based on tire nature of motion or *becoming.* As we have already shown (see nos. 21 and 26), *becoming* presupposes the absence of identity; it is a successive union of diverse things (for instance: that which is here, afterwards is there; that which is white becomes grey; the intellect from a state of ignorance gradually acquires a knowledge of things, becomes more penetrating, etc). This successive union of diverse things cannot be unconditioned; to deny this proposition would be to deny the principle of identity and to say that diverse elements, which of

12 See Aristotle, *Physics,* Bk. VI; on Aristotle's refutation of Zeno, cfr. Baudin, *"L'Acte et la Puissance,"* in *Revue Thomiste,* 1899, PP- 287-293.

themselves do not follow one another, do of themselves follow one another; it would mean to say that ignorance, which *of itself* is not knowledge, nor in any way connected with knowledge, nor the result of knowledge, can *of itself* be the result of knowledge. To say that *becoming* is its own sufficient reason, is to make contradiction the principle of all things (see n. 21).

If we study this *becoming* more closely, we observe not only that it is not unconditioned, but also that it requires a determinate cause, *i. e.,* one that is in act. In fact, if we consider that which becomes, we are obliged to say that *it is not yet* what it will be *(ex ente non fit ens, quia jam est ens),* and that it is not the *absolute nothing* of that which will be *(ex nihilo nihil fit),* at least, there must be a *possibility* of its being what it will be; for instance, that only can be moved locally which is susceptible of being moved; that only which is susceptible of heat, light, and magnetism is susceptible to these influences; the child who as yet does not know anything, *can* know something, and this constitutes the *real* difference between him and the irrational animal; finally, that alone will become a reality which is capable of existing, and which involves no contradiction in terms. (In this latter case no real power is required, but a possibility is). Therefore, *becoming* is the transition from potency to act, from indétermination to determination. But the sufficient reason for this transition is not to be found in the transition itself, since it is not unconditioned. Potency does not bring itself into act, and unconditioned union of diverse things is impossible. Therefore, *becoming* demands an extrinsic actualization or realizing *raison d'être,* which we called efficient cause (n. 25) when we showed the necessity as well as the twofold validity, objective and transcendental, of the principle of causality (see n. 25 and 29). This realizing *raison d'être* must itself be real before it can realize, must itself be actual before it can actualize, must itself be determined before

it can determine anything. This means that it must actually have that for which *becoming* is as yet only *in potentiality.*[13] To deny this is to assert that the greater can proceed from the less, or, what amounts to the same thing, that being arises out of nothingness. St. Thomas expresses this truth in the formula: *"'Nihil movetur nisi secundum quod est in potentia ad illud ad quod movetur; movet autem aliquid, secundum quod est actu* (nothing is moved except in so far as it is potentially capable of receiving such motion; only in so far as anything is actually in motion, does it move anything else").

Now, if it is impossible that one and the same *being* can at the same time and in the same sense be both in potency (undetermined) and in act (determined), it is equally impossible that one and the same *being* in the same sense can be both mover and moved; hence, if it is in motion, it is moved by some other being, unless it happens to be in motion in a certain sense with respect to one part of its being, in which case it can be moved by another part of its being. Such is the case with living beings, and even more so with sentient and intelligent beings. But since the part which moves is subject to a motion of another order, it demands in its turn an external mover. Hence we see that whatever is in motion, is moved by another.

The second proposition: *"There is no regress to infinity in a series of movers which are actually and essentially subordinate,"* is based upon the principle of causality and in no way upon the fact that an infinite and innumerable multitude is an impossibility. With Aristotle, St. Thomas, Leibniz, and Kant we do not see that it is a contradiction to admit a regress to infinity in a series of movers which were accidentally subordinate in the past. It cannot be proved that the series of generations in the animal kingdom or of the transformations of energy had a beginning

18 See Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote,* Vol. I, pp. 391 and 394.

and are not eternal (see la, q. 46, and *supra,* n. to). It is contrary to reason to say that an actually existing motion can have *its sufficient reason, its actualizing raison d'être, in a series of movers, each one of which is itself moved by some external cause.* If all the movers receive that impulse which they transmit, if there is not a prime mover which imparts movement without receiving it, then motion is out of the question, for it has no cause. "You may conjure up an infinite number of intermediate causes, but by this process you merely complicate the series, yet do not establish a single cause. You make the channel longer, but it has no source. If it has no source, then the intermediate causes are ineffective, and no result could be produced, or rather there will be neither intermediate causes nor result, which means that everything has vanished."[14] To try to dispense with the necessity of a source is the same as saying that a watch can run without a spring, provided it has an infinite number of wheels, "that a brush can paint by itself, provided it has a very long handle."[15] Such statements are a denial of our first proposition, for they imply that *becoming* is its own sufficient reason, that the unconditional union of diverse things is a possibility, that the greater proceeds from the less, *being* from nothingness, that the conditioned does not have to be explained by the unconditioned.

But there is no need of stopping anywhere in a series of past movers, since they exert no influence upon the actual movement which has to be accounted for; they are merely *accidental* causes (see n. 9 and to). The principle of sufficient reason does not compel us to *terminate* this series of accidental causes, but *to get away from it,* in order to rise up to a mover of another order, *not premoved,* and immobile in this sense, that immobility is not of potency, which is anterior to motion, but that it is of act, which

14 Scrtillangcs, *Les Sources de la Croyance en Dieu,* ed. in 8vo, p. 65.
15 *Ibid.*

has no need of being subjected to the process of *becoming* because it already exists. *{Immotus in se permanens).*

By applying these two principles to motion of any kind, we at last come to admit the existence of a *prime mover which is tn no way set in motion* by another. We must draw special attention to the fact that physical motion, not so much as motion, but insofar as it is physical, only demands an immobile mover from the physical point of view, for instance, a world-soul. But is this soul itself the subject of a spiritual motion, is it the substratum of a process of *becoming?* This appearance of something new, this *fieri {becoming)* presupposes in the soul the presence of a potency or faculty which was not its activity, in fact, which was not even in action, but merely had the power to act. Therefore, the intervention of a higher cause was necessary to set it in motion. If this higher mover is itself set in motion, then the question rests. In a series of essentially subordinate movers we must finally arrive at one which is its own principle of motion, and which can explain the *entity of its own action.* But that alone can explain the entity of its action, to which the action belongs intrinsically, not only as a potency, but also as an act, and which, consequently, is *its own very action, its very activity.* Such a mover is *absolutely immobile* in this sense that He has by and of Himself that which the others acquire by motion. Therefore, He is *essentially distinct from all mobile beings, either corporeal or spiritual.* This statement constitutes the first refutation of Pantheism, as the Vatican Council expresses it (Session III, c. i) : "Since God is *absolutely immutable,* He is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world." The first mover, being essentially immobile, superior to all motion, is necessarily distinct from the corporeal or spiritual world, which is by its very nature subject to change.

Moreover, such a mover must be self-existing; for that alone can

act of itself which exists by itself; *"operari sequitur esse et modus operandi modum essendi"* (action follows upon the nature of a being, and the mode of its action is according to the mode of its being); in other words, for a being to contain within itself the explanation of the *entity* of its action, it must be self-existing (Ia, q. 3, a. 1 and 2; q. 54, a. 1 and 2). Finally, just as A is A, so it must be with what is self-existing in regard to its existence (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). It must be the *self-subsistent being,* pure being, pure act, absolute identity, the reverse of that want of identity which is found in all *becoming.* This last-mentioned point will be brought out more clearly *a posteriori* by the fourth proof for the existence of God.

From the above remarks we see that the principle of identity is not only the supreme law of thought, but also the supreme law of reality. The identity here established is that of immutability, and the fourth proof will establish the more profound attribute of simplicity.

b) It may be of help to the imagination to present the proof for the existence of God drawn from motion by taking an example of subordinate causes which appeals to the senses. "A sailor holds up an anchor on board ship, the ship supports the sailor, the sea enables the ship to float, the earth holds in check the sea, the sun keeps the earth fixed in its course, and some unknown centre of attraction holds the sun in its place. But after that? . . . We cannot go on in this manner *ad infinitum* in a series of causes which are actually subordinate."[10] There must be a primary efficient cause which actually exists and gives efficacy to all the other causes. It is useless to appeal to the past series of transformations of energy, so as to discover the one which immediately preceded the present condition of our solar system and of the entire universe; these anterior forms of energy are not causes; they were, besides, transitory and as indigent as

10 Sec Sertillanges, *Sources de la Croyance en Dieu,* p. 65.

the actual forms, and just as much in need of explanation as they. If the series is eternal, it is eternally insufficient. We must necessarily admit the existence of a non-transitory cause, *one in itself permanently immobile (immota in se permanens'),* not at the beginning of the series, but above all others, a sort of permanent source of life in the universe, and the origin of all *becoming.*

This all-sufficing cause could not be material, even if, accepting the theory of the Dynamists, we conceived of matter as endowed with energy and with certain primitive essential powers. The question here at issue is not physical, but metaphysical. Physics, a particular science, considers the cause of motion precisely as motion. We have to consider it from the metaphysical point of view, insofar as it is a manifestation of being. The question remains, therefore, whether this matter, endowed with energy, is an agent that can of and by itself explain the *being* of its action: in other words, an agent whose power to act is its very action, *per se primo agens:* intrinsically and immediately operative? (Ia, q. 3, a. 2, 3a ratio; q. 54, a. 1). This is impossible, for, as we have just seen, such an agent cannot be the subject of *becoming,* and matter is pre-eminently such a subject.

c) This proof from motion may be exemplified in another way by considering motions of the spiritual order, as St. Thomas has done in the article of his *Summa* entitled, "Whether the Will is Moved by any External Principle?" (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4). Our will begins to will certain things which it did not will before; in fact, when striving to attain a certain end, the will, in virtue of this first volition, moves itself to will the means for attaining that end. Thus, a sick person wishes to be cured, and as a consequence decides to see the doctor. But the will was not always actuated by this superior tendency towards an end. Since to be restored to health is something good, the will began to wish for this good. Moreover, this actual willing of what is good is an act distinct from the faculty of willing. Our will is not an eternal act of lov-

ing what is good; of itself it does not contain its first act except *in potentia,* and when it appears, it is something new, a *becoming.* To find the realizing *raison d'être* of this *becoming* and of the *being* of this act itself, we must go back to a mover of a higher order, to one that is its own activity, determines itself to act, and, therefore, is self-existent Being itself. Only self-existent Being can explain the entity of a *becoming* which does not determine itself. "Therefore we must of necessity suppose that the will advances to its first movement in virtue of the instigation of some exterior mover, as Aristotle concludes in his Eudemian Ethics, VII, ch. XIV" (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4). Afterwards the will, already in action, moves itself to further acts; but in doing so it functions merely as a secondary cause, always subordinate to the impulse or motion of the first cause.

St. Thomas also proposes the question (Ia, q. 82, a. 4, ad 3um), whether every act of the intellect presupposes an act of the will, applying the intellect to consider what is presented to it. He answers that the first act of the intellect does not presuppose an anterior act of the will, but only that it be moved by the primary intellect. "There is no need to go on indefinitely," he says, "but we stop at the intellect as preceding all the rest. For every movement of the will must be preceded by apprehension, whereas every apprehension is not preceded by an act of the will; but the principle of counsel and understanding is an intellectual principle higher than our intellect, namely, God, as Aristotle also says *(Eth. Eudem.,* VII, ch. XIV). And in this way he shows that there is no procedure *in infinitum."* See also Ia, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2um; q. 79, a. 4; q. 105, a. 5, where St. Thomas explains that the concurrence of the Supreme Intellect is necessary not only for the first act of the created intellect, but also for each successive act, and hence the secondary cause always remains subordinate to the primary cause, and every movement relating to participation in an absolute perfection presupposes an intervention of

God by reason of this same perfection, which is not such by participation. No created mover acts without the concurrence of the prime mover; no created intellect without the concurrence of the primary intellect, and there is no created freedom of action without the concurrence of the primary freedom.

B. Objections. Quite a number of objections have been raised against this proof. The most important of them, which we shall discuss first, concern the first proposition, namely, that whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another *{quidquid movetur ab alio movetur).* Then we shall examine those objections which deny the necessity, in a series of actually subordinate movers, of finally coming to one that is first. Last of all we shall discuss those objections which directly attack our conclusion and claim to prove that a motionless mover is an intrinsic contradiction, or that such a mover is not to be identified with die true God.

a) The principle, "Whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another," is contested, as far as physical motion goes, by a number of modern physicists, whose philosophy is either (a) mechanistic or (/?) dynamistic. As far as psychic motion is concerned, the principle is disputed by some Scholastics, including Suarez (γ). According to certain followers of the philosophy of *becoming,*[1] it would seem that this axiom derives its apparent lucidity from a spatial image and rests upon the imaginary postulate of the substantial distinction of bodies (δ).

In the physical order, various objections have been raised, attacking the principle, both by the Mechanists and the Dynamists.

a) As for the Mechanists, who follow Descartes, and Democritus amongst the ancients, motion (they mean local motion, the only kind which they admit), is a reality distinct from extension, which, *always remaining the same,* surrounds extended matter and passes from one body to another. According to

[1] For instance, Abbé Le Roy in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* March, 1907.

Democritus, motion, like matter, is absolute. According to Descartes, God has from the beginning placed in things an inaugmentable quantity of motion, and conserves this motion just as He conserves the things themselves. This mathematical conception of motion, which has passed into modern physics, rejects the question of the relations between motion and being, and consequently also that of the origin of motion, and considers merely its transformations. Descartes has deduced from it the principle of inertia in explicit terms: "If a portion of matter is at rest, it does not begin to set itself in motion; but once it is in motion, we have no reason to suppose that it will ever be compelled to cease moving itself, so long as it does not meet with anything that retards or stops its motion." *{Principes,* II, 37; *Le Monde,* VII). He adds that "Every moving body has a tendency to continue moving in a straight line." *{Principes,* II, 39; *Le Monde,* VII). This principle, admitted *a priori* by Descartes, was accepted as the result of experience by Galileo. Newton, Laplace, and Poisson believed in its absolute validity. To-day it is looked upon as a hypothesis suggested, but not verified, by the facts.[18] From his concept of motion Descartes deduced what in our present terminology is known as the principle of the conservation of energy. "It is impossible," he said, "for motion ever to cease, or even for it to change, except insofar as it passes from one subject to another;" if it disappears in one form, it reappears in another. *{Principes,* II, 36),[19] Robert Mayer, the originator of thermodynamics, would say that "the totality of energy in a system in which the bodies are removed from all external influence (the sum of their actual and potential energy), remains constant."

From this point of view, anything that is in motion no longer needs an actual mover whilst it is in motion; it needs him only when it passes from a state of rest to what since Descartes has

[18] Sec H. Poincaré, *La Science et l'Hypothèse,* pp. 112-119.
[18] See E. Naville, *La Physique Moderne,* and ed., 1890, pp. 86 and 87.

been called the *state of motion {état de mouvement).* By local motion a body would acquire nothing; it would merely pass from potency to act, it would merely change its position.

Considering this new theory of local motion as an advance in science, Fr. Bulliot, at a Catholic Congress held in Brussels, in 1894, proposed to use as a basis for the proof of God's existence from motion, not motion itself, but the transition from repose to motion.[20]

It has been rightly said in answer to this proposal, that the famous proof in that case is no longer a proof based on motion, but one based on contingency, and in this hypothesis motion, like stable and permanent realities, needs only a conservative cause, but no prime mover. Moreover, many other things are required before the Cartesian idea of motion can be accepted, either from the philosophical or from the scientific point of view, and if it were acceptable for local motion, our proof could still be based on qualitative motions or augmentation.

From the philosophical point of view it cannot be admitted that motion, while *remaining numerically the same,* passes from one subject into another; neither can it be admitted that energy is a reality which remains numerically the same, though passing in different forms from one subject into another. It is a means by which the *imagination* of the savant can represent the *phenomena,* of which all he has to do is to determine what are their permanent relations. The *concept* thus formed cannot claim to express the intrinsic nature of the realities. It belongs to metaphysics, and not to positive science. Now, from the metaphysical point of view or that of *being,* "it is false to assert that local motion and heat are something external to the bodies which they affect. Motion and heat are accidents which cannot possibly be conceived outside of a subject. It is the subject which gives them their entity; and they are *this* motion and *this* heat because they

20 See *Revue Thomiste,* 1894, p. 578.

are the motion or the heat of *this* subject. To affirm that motion is something which, while *remaining what it is,* can pass from one body into another, is to affirm a contradiction. Motion does not leave the moving body, it does not communicate itself, but imparts motion to another body; heat does not change its locality, but produces heat within a given circumference." 21

This Cartesian theory of local motion involves other metaphysical impossibilities. Thus we cannot speak of a *state of motion.* Motion, being essentially a change, is the opposite of a state, which implies stability. There is no less change in the transition from one position to another in the course of movement, than in the transition from repose to motion itself; if, therefore, this first change demands another cause, the following changes demand it for the same reason. To deny that the change which takes place in the course of motion demands a cause, is tantamount to denying the principle of identity or non-contradiction. In fact, this change of position is a successive union of the diverse (of positions A, B, C. . .), and to say that the unconditional union of the diverse is possible is to say that elements of themselves diverse can of themselves be something of a one, that elements which of themselves are not united can be of themselves united and succeed each other. Such an admission involves a denial of the principle of non-contradiction. Generalized and raised to the standard of a supreme principle, this negation implies Evolutionistic Pantheism of the Heraclitan, Hegelian or Bergsonian type (cfr. *supra,* n. 4 and 21), in which *becoming* is its own sufficient reason. All theories which, like that of Descartes, refuse to study *becoming* as a function of *being,* which alone is intelligible of and by itself, regard it merely as a function of *repose.* The state of repose may be inferior to *be-*

21 P. Lacome, "*Theories Physiques*" in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1894, p. 96. Consult this same article for the other difficulties arising from the Cartesian theory of local motion, and for the distinction between this latter and qualitative motion (for instance, increase in the degree of heat).

coming, that is, to the *terminus a quo* kind of repose, which means the point that marks the beginning of motion. *Being* is always superior to *becoming;* that which *is,* is always more than that which is *becoming,* and which as yet is not. *Being* is the efficient and final cause of *becoming,* but of itself postulates neither an efficient nor a final cause. The *Mechanistic* theory, which considers motion as local, may well study it as a function of *repose;* but metaphysics, which considers local motion precisely as motion, as a process of *becoming,* must study it as a function of *being,* which is its formal object.

Another philosophical impossibility, which arises from the preceding one, consists in explaining how a finite and *minimum* impulsion could produce an infinite effect, *i. e.,* a perpetual motion, in which there would always be something new, a perpetual absence of identity. Aristotle was more to the point when he demanded an *infinite potency* for a motion which is infinite in duration. (Cfr. *Physics,* Bk. VIII; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 2i; and Cajetan's opuscule, *De Dei Gloriosi Infinitate Intensiva).*

It is true that the Aristotelian idea of motion, which is applied without difficulty to either qualitative or augmentative motion, cannot at first glance be easily reconciled with the motion of projectiles which continues after their impulsion. (Cfr. *Physics,* Bk. VII, Leet. 3; Bk. VIII, Leet. 22: "Whether the Motion of Projectiles can be Continuous?") The explanation given by Aristotle is obscure; he has recourse to the propulsive elasticity of the circumambient air, which would sustain the projectile in its motion. St. Thomas is much clearer when he states that there is in the projectile a force or instrumental power imparted to it by the principal agent.22 It has been admitted by a

22 "An instrument is said to be moved by the principal agent, so long as it *retains the power imparted to it by the principal agent:* hence an arrow continues on its course so long as it retains the impulsive force imparted to it by the projector." *De Potentia,* q. 3, a. 11, ad sum.

number of Scholastics and some Thomists, Goudin for instance,[23] that the initial impulse generates in the projectile an *impetus,* a force capable of serving as motor. This explanation safeguards the universal principle that "whatever is moved, is set in motion by another." In fact, as Goudin remarks, "by reason of the impulse given to the projectile it is not at the same time and in the same sense in potentiality and in act; it actually has this *impetus,* but it is *in potentia* with regard to the position towards which it is tending." In other words, the projectile is *in act* so far as its dynamic properties are concerned, and *in potentia* with regard to its future positions in space. Thus all contradiction is avoided. This idea of an *impetus,* which may be mathematically expressed as a *vital force,* seems destined to play an essential role in the metaphysics of local motion, the purpose of which is to show that the principle of inertia, as to what there is of experimental truth about it, is itself subordinate to the principle that "there is no change without a cause." [24]

For the rest, the principle of inertia, insofar as it affirms that an imparted motion continues without a cause, cannot be verified by experience. H. Poincare, in his work *La Science et l'Hypothèse* (pp. mil), has made it clear that this principle is neither an *a priori* truth, "susceptible of being deduced from the principle of sufficient reason," nor a truth demonstrated from experience, as Newton thought it was. "Has it ever been proved from experiments with bodies removed from the influence of all external force, that these bodies are not influenced by any force?" This hypothesis was suggested by some particular facts

[23] *Physica,* I, disp. 3, q. 1, a. 6.

[24] The principle of inertia is incontestably true, insofar as it affirms that inanimate bodies are of themselves incapable of modifying their state of rest; in truth, only living organisms are able of themselves to act and set themselves in motion. But that the motion once imparted to a body continues indefinitely, is a *convenient* fiction for *representing* certain mathematical or mechanical relations of the astronomical order; from the philosophical point of view it is seriously to be contested. (See J. Maritain, *La Philosophie Bergsonienne,* Paris, 1914, p. 143).

(projectiles), and "extended without fear to the most general cases (in astronomy, for instance), because we know that in these general cases experience can neither confirm nor deny it." *{Ibid.,* p. 119). The same has been said of the principle of the conservation of energy: "In a system of bodies removed from all external influence, the total energy of this system remains constant." It has never been possible to withdraw a system of corporeal beings from the influence of invisible forces, such as that of God or of free will,25 and, above all, it has never been and never will be proved that the whole universe is a closed system.26

Therefore we maintain that the Aristotelian definition of motion as a transition from potentiality to act is applicable to local as well as to the other physical motions (either qualitative or augmentative); in other words, local motion is no more a *state* than the other motions; it is a process of *becoming.* Hence this proof for the existence of God can start from motion as its principle.

Against those who refuse to see that there is question of *becoming* in local motion, it would be possible, it is true, with Fr. Bulliot to take the transition from the state of rest to motion as the basic principle in the argumentation and say with Paul Janet,27 that if bodies are equally indifferent with regard to rest as to motion, there must be some reason to account for the fact that they are more often in motion than at rest, and this reason cannot be in the bodies. Moreover, we may argue from this fact that bodies are contingent. If they are equally indifferent with regard to rest and to motion (since it is only in one of these two states that they can exist), we must conclude that they have

26 See Boutroux, *De la Contingence des Lois de la Nature,* 3rd ed., pp. 75-85; De Munnynck, *"La Conservation de l'Energie et la Uberti Morale"* in *Revue Thomiste,* 1897, pp. 115 if.

28 See E. Naville, *La Physique Moderne,* 2nd ed., pp. 35–42.

21 Le Matérialisme Contemporain, p. 51.

not the reason of their existence in themselves, but postulate an extrinsic cause.

If it is claimed that local motion can be explained by another form of energy, such as heat, then this is merely delaying the question. This anterior form of energy is not numerically the same reality as that which exists in local motion, but it is a reality of the same kind, likewise transitory, requiring just as much an explanation as local motion and every preceding form does. It matters not whether the series of transformations is eternal, for it would be eternally insufficient. Hence we come back to our proof, which is that, to account for these transformations, there must be a mover which is not transitory itself, and which not only can come into action, but which goes into action by itself, and contains the source of its activity within itself. Such a mover cannot be anything material, for, unlike matter, it cannot be the substratum of any *becoming,* but possesses primarily and essentially everything that is gradually acquired in the process of becoming. The principle of the conservation of energy is not, therefore, any more in conflict with the proof from motion than is the old principle that *"the corruption of one thing means the generation of another."* The energy remains the same, but not numerically so; a *transformation* has taken place within it, which is the very reverse of what is *permanent* and *which, lil^e everything that laci^s identity, demands a cause.*

Moreover, we know that the principle of the conservation of energy has its corrective in the principle of the diminution of energy. Mechanical energy, when transferred into thermic energy, cannot be restored in equivalent quantity; thus more mechanical energy is absorbed for the generation of heat than can be given back by it. Some thought it possible to deduce a proof for the existence of God from this principle. If the world

thus approaches a state of equilibrium and final rest, they argued, it is because motion is not necessary, and therefore, must have an extrinsic reason, a cause.[28]

This is an argument *ad homtnem,M* and is worth just as much as the principle of the diminution of energy is worth. Accepting Duhem's warning at the Brussels Congress, let us not "have recourse to disputed theories of physics in establishing the laws of metaphysics."[30] In matter of fact we need not have recourse to the principle of the diminution of energy in order to preserve the true meaning of the proof of the prime mover against the Mechanists, who, like Descartes, are content with a brief allusion to the origin of things in the past. In all *becoming* there is something *new,* which demands, not a *creative evolution,* but the intervention of the Primary Being.

β) Certain Dynamists present an objection which directly contradicts the principle that whatever is moved is set in motion by something else (*"quidquid movetur, ab alio movetur").* They admit with us against Descartes, that motion is not imparted ready-made to an object by some external force, but their reason is that they do not see the necessity of admitting an external mover and view the activity of inanimate things after the manner of living organisms. According to Schiller, "the proofs based on motion and on causes are possible only if we accept a Mechanistic hypothesis for the world; in a Dynamic system of philosophy they are of no value."[31] We ask: Did Aristotle and St. Thomas teach Mechanism?

This objection does not affect our principle, which is true even of living organisms. A living organism cannot, without contradiction, be in the same sense both mover and moved; it is moved by one part of itself (its members), and another part of it

28 See Hontheim, *Theologia Naturalis,* n. 336.
29 Chossat in the *Diet, de Théol. Cath.,* art. *"Dieu,"* col. 938.
80 Cfr. *Revue Thomiste,* 1894, p. 579.
81 See *Revue de Philosophie,* 1906, p. 653.

(the heart and the nerve centres) acts as mover; but this other part, being the substratum of a motion, demands an external mover, and in the final analysis, a mover not subject to any process of *becoming*.

y) The Dynamists think they can explain away the force of this argument by admitting a *force* which acts as an intermediary between potency and act, and which can bring itself into action. This force is the *virtuality* spoken of by Leibniz and the *virtual act* by which Suarez[82] believed he could explain how the will can bring itself into action without a divine impulse. In the system of Dynamic philosophy this objection ranks as final.[83]

We can easily answer this objection by saying that the virtual act is distinct from the action which results from it. Is there, or is there not, a trace of *becoming* in this act? Is its action eternal, or, on the contrary, did it come about in time? This appearance of something *new,* this process of *becoming,* presupposes an active potency which is not the source of its activity, which did not even bring itself into action, but which only proves that it could come into action. And then, how are we to account for the transition of this virtual act to the second act, which previously was non-existent? To say that it effects this by its own power is to posit an absolute beginning, which is contrary to reason. The greater does not come from the less, nor *being* from nothingness. Therefore, the virtual act has been brought into existence by an external mover, which, in the final analysis, must be its own activity, and cannot be the substratum of any *becoming.*[3*]

We see, then, how false it is to say with Hebert[35] that the apparent clarity of the principle, "Whatever is moved is set in mo-

[32] *Disp.,* XXIX, sect. 1, n. 7.

[33] John of St. Thomas, *In lam,* q. 2, disp. 3, a. 2, no. 6; Leibniz, *Monadologie,* :d. Boutroux, pp. 39-41; Klcutgen, *La Philosophie Scolastique,* Vol. Ill, p. 329; Duhem, *L'Evolution de la Mécanique,* p. 36.

[34] See Gardeil, "*L'Evolutionisme et les Principes de St. Thomas*" in *Revue Thomiste,* 1893, PP· 323 ff· See also *Revue Thomiste* of 1899, p. 293.

[36] *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* 1902, p. 398.

tion by something else, is based upon a spatial image illegitimately introduced into a metaphysical problem;" or to assert with Le Roy,[36] that this axiom rests upon a postulate of the practical imagination, according to which there are movers and moved objects substantially distinct. One recalls to mind that famous postulate of morcellation: "The distinctions between mover and moved, between motion and its subject, and the affirmation of the primacy of act over potency, all proceed from the same postulate of common thought. . . . Criticism shows that this morcellation of matter is but the result of a mental process, prompted by the dictates of practical utility and discourse. . . . If the world consists of an immense continuity of unceasing transformations, it is no longer a question of a graduated and innumerable series of beings which necessarily calls for an absolute beginning. . . . In affirming the primacy of act, these same postulates are understood. If causality is but the outpouring of a fulness into a void, a communication to a receptive term of that which another term possesses, in a word, if it is the anthropomorphic operation of an agency, then well and good! But what do these idols of the practical imagination amount to? *Why not simply identijy being with becoming?* . . . As things *are* motion, there is no longer any need of asking whence they derive motion." [37] Motion not only does not demand an explanation, but it explains everything else. Nominalistic Sensualism can scarcely put the case differently.

We may refuse to go beyond the limits of this Empiricism, and rest with Heraclitus and Bergson in the *-πάντα ρῦ* or universal flux of things; but if we wish to find an *intelligible* interpretation of the real, if we wish, without denying the process of *becoming* (as Parmenides did), to conceive this process as a func-

[36] *Rev. de Mit. et de Morale,* March, 1907.
[37] Le Roy, *ibid.*

tion of *being,* which alone is intelligible by itself, what other explanation is there than that given by Aristotle, who declared that what already is, cannot *become;* nothing comes from nothingness? Nevertheless, there is such a phenomenon as *becoming.* Where does it come from? It comes from a certain milieu intermediary between determined being and pure nodiingness; in other words, it comes from undetermined being or potency. Now, potency not being the same as act, it cannot be actualized or determined except by a being which is in act. The principle, "Whatever is moved, is set in motion by something else," therefore, far from being based upon a spatial image, is based upon the very nature of *becoming,* rendered intelligible not by reason of corporeal being, but of *being itself,* which is the formal object of the intellect. Thus this notion and this principle can be applied to a *becoming* which has nothing spatial about it, as in the case of the will. The division of *being* into potency and act, which is necessary in order that *becoming* may be rendered intelligible, may well be called a morcellation; but it is not a utilitarian *morcellation of the sensibly continuous,* but a *morcellation of intelligible being,* which, as we have seen (n. 21), must be admitted under penalty of making ourselves ridiculous by interpreting, as Heraclitus and Hegel did, the supreme law of the real in such a way that it becomes an absurdity.

"Why not simply identify *being* with *becoming?"* asks Le Roy.[38] For this very good reason that *becoming* is not, like *being,* intelligible by itself. *Becoming* is a successive union of diverse elements. This union cannot be unconditional, for diversity, of itself and as such, cannot be one. *Becoming* is the transition from indetermination to determination, and hence presupposes a determinate cause; to deny this is to say that nothingness can be the cause of *being,* which is a denial of the principle

[38] *Rev. de Met. et de Morale,* March, 1907.

of identity and a setting up in its place of the principle of Pantheism.[88]

Our proof, therefore, in no way presupposes the numerical distinction of substances, which Hébert and Le Roy assert. Even if the world were but one substance, *as long as there is in it such a thing as becoming,* it demands a mover *which is not the subject oj any becoming,* and which consequently is distinct from it. Diversity presupposes identity in things, the changeable presupposes the permanent, and the undetermined, the determined. In this there is no question of spatial imagination nor of anthropomorphism (see n. 23). Seek not for the *permanence* which matter or force intrinsically calls for; it is too evident that they do not possess that attribute, since *this* matter and *this* force *transform themselves,* and *this transformation, which is added to their permanence, demands a cause which in itself is not the substratum of the transformations.* The principle, *"Whatever is moved, is set in motion by something else"* loses none of its validity.

b) Let us now pass on to the objection raised against the principle of ἀι,ἀγκι; στ^ραι, that we must finally arrive at the first in a series of movers which are essentially and actually subordinated to one another. It is clearly not a question of a series of movers which were accidentally subordinated to each other in the past. The necessity of coming to an end in this series cannot be demonstrated, but only that we must terminate the series (la, q. 46). The objection that arises here is the same as that which Aristotle

88 On this subject consult J. Maritain, *La Philosophie Bergsonienne,* Paris, 1914, especially the chapters on the criticism of the intellect, intuition, the duration of time, God, and Bergsonian evolutionism. The author, a former disciple of Bergson, gives us the spirit of Bergsonism, and not merely the letter. He sets before us in bold relief the fundamental principles of this doctrine and shows how they contradict the first principles of reason, the explanation of which constitutes the most important part of the general metaphysics of Aristotle and St. Thomas. This same work contains an excellent expose of the Thomistic teaching on intellectual intuition, of the proofs for the existence of God and of free will. M. Maritain later expressed full agreement with the Thomists on these question».

proposed to himself, namely, may it not be a case of a *vicious circle in the causes*—so that the prime mover would be the moved in a kind of motion different from that in which it is the mover? Thus the intellect moves the will in the order of specification by placing the good before it, and the intellect is moved by the will in the practical order by directing the intellect to consider this same good. *"Causae ad invicem sunt causae in diverso genere" i. e.,* causes mutually interact, though in a different order.

To answer this difficulty it will suffice to show that there can be no vicious circle here in the same genus of causality. The cause would have and would not have what is required for causation. It would and would not presuppose its effect. If the warmth of the earth depends upon the radiation of solar heat, the latter cannot depend upon the former. If the intellect is prompted to act by the will, the latter cannot, from this same point of view, depend upon the intellect. Now, in the order of efficient causality the prime mover demands, both for psychic and for physical movements, that, inasmuch as it is prime mover, it must be self-existent; for only that acts of itself which is self-existent, since action presupposes being, and the mode of action follows the mode of being. It cannot, therefore, be dependent in its being and action upon any of the subordinate causes, since all these causes depend for their action upon the being and action of this same prime mover. In the order of efficient causality all that is required is that there be no vicious circle to enable us to establish the existence of a prime and uncreated mover, who, as such, cannot be dependent ill any other order of causality (objective or final).

c) We come finally to a consideration of the objections which directly attack our conclusion that "there is a prime mover not moved by any kind of motion, whose very action and, consequently, whose very being is unconditioned, and who is none other than the true God." Some claim that a motionless mover is

a contradiction, while others assert that such a mover is not necessarily transcendental, distinct from the world, or identical with a personal God.

A motionless mover would be a contradiction; for who says "mover" says "beginning," and beginning is opposed to immobility (Kant's fourth antinomy). This objection is presented in all its force by Penjon in his *Précis de Philosophie.* After having decided with Spir, that the unconditional union of diverse elements is an impossibility, and that, for this reason, every change (the successive union of the diverse) demands a cause, he concludes: "There can be no connection between a *being* identical with itself and a change which postulates a cause only and precisely for this reason that there is no point of contact between it and the absolute and invariable nature of things. Only, from the fact that a change has taken place, another change must occur to account for this one, and so on in an indefinite regression." [40] "Far from positively affirming the existence of a prime mover and a first or absolute cause, the principle of causality necessarily excludes it."[41]

Aristotle was fully aware of this objection, and even though he did not go so far as to admit the idea of creation (the production of all *being* or of *being* as the *being* of things), and especially the idea of a free creation, he admitted that the series of changes is infinite in the regressive order (a *parte ante)* and that the world and the changes therein exist from all eternity *(ab aeterno; Physics,* Bk. VIII; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 1 and 2). But for all that he did not deny the fact of a prime mover. He would have replied to the above-quoted objection by saying that all these past changes are not the cause of the actual change, and exert no influence upon it; nay, more, since each of these changes has not its sufficient explanation in itself, it cannot be the

40 Précis de Philosophie, p. 112.
41 Ibid., p. 471.

reason for subsequent changes. A prolongation of the series does not change the nature of them: ten thousand idiots do not make one intelligent man. Since the union of the diverse has not its sufficient reason within itself, it demands an explanation outside of itself, and since the union of the diverse cannot be explained by anything within itself, it presupposes a unity of a higher order; the multiple brings us back to the one which is intelligible in and by itself. The fact that we regard it as mysterious that the multiple results from the one, and motion from the motionless, does not justify us in denying the existence of this higher cause. It is absolutely required by the principles of our reason and by the mobile and multiple beings of the lower order of which we have direct and certain knowledge. Moreover, the higher cause, which we know only indirectly and inadequately by its effects, must remain obscure for us, and the proper manner of its action must escape our detection. We have no positive knowledge of this mode, as it is in itself, but know it merely in a negative and relative manner, as when we say that it is an unmoved mover or the prime mover. What is this divine causality in itself? It is a mystery. But the obscurity in which it is wrapped, so far as we are concerned, should not cause us to doubt the certainties which lead us up to it, especially if these certainties give us due warning that they can only end in obscurity and that the mystery will remain.

For the rest, Aristotle did not consider himself dispensed from the obligation of proving that there is nothing repugnant in the idea of a motionless mover. He proves this point in his *Physics,* Bk. III; Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 4; Bk. VIII, Comment, of St. Thomas, Leet. 9. He even goes so far as to prove that every mover as such *[per* re] is immovable, and movable only *per accidens,* just as it is *per accidens* that an architect is a musician. To understand his reasoning, we have but to rise above the imagination and define the action of the mover as a function of *being,*

and not as a case of *local repose.* To move means to determine, to actualize, to realize; it is accidental for that which determines to have been itself determined (e. *g.,* for that which heats to have been itself heated). How indeed, could that which is still in the stage of *becoming* and as yet is not an actuality, move something else? The previous changes referred to in the objection are, therefore, but the accidental cause of the actual change. What is *necessarily* demanded of a mover is that it be *in act;* a thing must be hot before it can heat something else; in order to teach, one must actually have knowledge. If, therefore, a *being* is by its nature determined and in act, if it not only can act, but if it is its own action, it will act of its own accord, not having to be moved by another. *From this superior point of view such a being will be immobile, not with the immobility of inertia, but with the immobility of supreme activity.* There is nothing for it to acquire, since it has of and by itself, and all at once, everything which it can have and which can accrue to it from without. Just as diversity presupposes identity, and as the multiple presupposes the one, so also the undetermined presupposes the determined, and the transition from potentiality to act presupposes the pure act. If the change is that of *being* in the stage of *becoming,* it must necessarily have its reason in the *being which is* and which has no need of *becoming.* How could a *being* in the act of *becoming* be the cause *of becoming* in another? Can the child which is not yet born, procreate? Penjon has confused the immobility of potency with that of act; the former cannot account for motion, because it is inferior to it: the latter, on the contrary, is superior to motion, and for this reason can explain it.

It is said that while a motionless mover may have been moving *from eternity,* as Aristotle held, it could not have begun to move. We shall reply to this objection by showing that the "prime mover" by its very definition means that it is eternal,

and that its action dominates time, which is the measure of motion.

Thus we see how it is that this prime mover, which cannot be the substratum of any *becoming,* is transcendental and essentially distinct from the world, which is by its very nature changeable. If we note further that this prime mover is not confined to beings of the material order, but also controls those endowed with intellect and will, we already have the personal God, "in whom we live, move, and have our being." [42] The God to which the proof from motion leads us, is not, therefore, so far removed from the God of whom St. Paul speaks and of whom the liturgy sings:

Rerum Deus tenax vigor
Immotus in te permanens.
(God, powerful sustainer of all things,
Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved.)

C) *The results of this proof from motion.*—From this argument we conclude that the prime mover must be: (1) pure act; (2) infinite; (3) incorporeal and immaterial; (4) intelligent; (5) omnipresent; (6) eternal, and (7) unique.

(1) *The prime mover is pure act,* that is to say, there is nothing potential in him. We have already excluded all potentiality in the order of action. The prime mover not only *can* act, but its action is identical with itself. Also there cannot be any potentiality in its being, for *"operari sequitur esse et modus operandi modum essendi,"* that is, first comes the nature of a being, and then its operation; and the mode of operation follows the mode of being. That which is self-operative must be self-existent. If there were in this prime mover a transition from non-being to being, this could be so only in virtue of a higher cause, and then we

42 Acts XVII, 28.

should no longer have the prime mover (1a, q. 3, a. 1, 2, 4). In considering the fourth proof of God's existence we shall see that the self-existent being must be the Supreme Being (see n. 39 a).

(2) *The prime mover is infinitely perfect,* because pure actuality without any admixture of potentiality. And this is equally true whether we consider the essence or the action of such a being (1a, q. 4, a. 1 and 2; q. 7, a. 1). Act means the determination of being in point of accomplishment and perfection; pure act is, therefore, pure perfection. It is at the same time pure being; pure intellection, always in act, of pure being always actually known; pure love, always in act, of the plenitude of being always actually loved.

(3) *The prime mover is immaterial and incorporeal.* Immaterial because matter is essentially a potential subject, susceptible of change, pre-eminently the subject of *becoming.* The prime mover, on the contrary, is pure act, without any admixture of *becoming.* He is not corporeal, since He is not material. Besides, a body is composed of parts and depends on its parts, whereas the pure act excludes all composition and dependency. In Him there can be no question of more perfect and less perfect, as is the case with the whole and its parts. Because He is pure act, He is pure perfection (1a, q. 3, a. 1 and 2; *Physics,* Bk. VIII, Leet. 23).

(4) *The prime mover is intelligent.* We know this not only *a posteriori,* because He moves the intellects (1a, p. 79, a. 4), but also *a priori,* because immateriality is the basis of intelligibility and of intelligence (1a, q. 14, a. 1). It will be the special task of the fifth proof of God's existence to establish the reality of this attribute (n. 40).

(5) *The prime mover is omnipresent,* because to move all beings, whether spiritual or corporeal, He must be present, since these beings do not move themselves, but are moved by Him. "He works in every agent," writes St Thomas (1a, q. 8, a. 1; q. 105,

a. 5). The Prophet Isaias proclaims this truth as follows: "Lord, thou hast wrought all our works for us." (Is. XXVI, 12).

(6) *The prime mover is eternal,* for He has always, by and of Himself, had His own being and action without any change. His action is not measured by time, since in Him there can be no succession. It is only the effect of this action which can be said to occur in time, because it is only this effect which can be said to be successive. In this there is no contradiction. Since this eternal action is superior to time, it creates time as a modality of its effects (see la, q. to, a. 2).

(7) *The prime mover is unique,* because pure act cannot be multiplied. Anything which would bring about a differentiation in pure act, so as to make two or several pure acts, would set a limit to the perfection of pure act, and thus destroy it.

Moreover, a second pure act could be nothing more than the first, and would be superfluous. Could there be anything more absurd than a God who is superfluous? (la, q. 11, a. 3). In the fourth proof for the existence of God not only this attribute, but also that of infinite perfection, will be conclusively proved.[43]

37) *Proof by means of efficient causes.*

The point of departure of this proof is not *becoming,* but *being,* which is the termination of *becoming* and which remains after it. In the article entitled: "Whether Creatures Need to be Kept in Being by God?" (la, q. 104, a. 1), St. Thomas distinguishes clearly between *becoming {fieri)* and *being {esse).* See also la, q. 104, a. 2: "Whether God Preserves Every Creature Immediately?"

Certain agents are the cause of the *becoming* of their effect, but not directly of the *being* of this effect. Thus a father is the

43 On this deduction of the attributes of the Prime Mover sec Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* Bk. XII, ch. 6, 7, 9, to.

cause of the passive generation of his son, but he may die, while the son continues to live. Other agents are the causes both of the *becoming* and of the *being* of their effect, and any cessation in their action could only mean that the corresponding effect ceased to exist. The generation of an animal depends not only upon the male parent of the species, but also upon the numerous conditions and cosmic influences which are necessary for its conservation. The effects of atmospheric pressure upon the organism are a sufficient illustration of this truth. Any notable decrease or increase of this pressure causes great uneasiness in the organism, due to the lack of equilibrium between the elastic force of the internal gases and the external pressure. If this pressure were to be completely removed, the walls of the organism would collapse under the action of the internal gases. Likewise, if solar heat is eliminated from animal life, even the most vigorous of animals will soon die. "Remove the chemical activity from the air which the animal breathes, or from the food which it assimilates, and it perishes at once. This animal existence is of such a nature that, while at first sight it appears to be independent, it is, on the contrary, at every *moment* of its existence, *actually* dependent upon a vast number of influences." [44]

Such is the basic principle of this second proof. It is no longer expressed by saying that *"It is certain and evident to the senses that in this world some things are set in motion,"* but by saying that *"In these objects of sense perception we find that there is a certain order of efficient causes"* For instance, all the cosmic influences are necessarily subordinated to the production and conservation of a mere gnat.

But these causes, as St. Thomas remarks, cannot, in their turn, cause themselves, for before anything can be a cause of something else, it must be first in existence. As St. Thomas says: *"Non est possibile quod aliquid sit causa efficiens sui ipsius, quia*

** Sertillanges, *Les Sources de la Croyance en Dieu,* p. 70.

sic esset prius seipso, quod est impossibile." (It is not possible for anything to be the efficient cause of itself, because in such a case it would have to exist before it actually exists, which is an impossibility). If, therefore, the above-mentioned causes are not self-existent, their existence depends upon higher causes, and so forth. But we cannot proceed *ad infinitum,* but must finally arrive at a primary cause, itself uncaused, which has *being* from itself, which it can give to, and preserve in, others, and without which nothing that actually exists could continue to exist. "Examine separately each of the cosmic influences necessary for the conservation of an animal, and you will find that it is itself the result of a series of subordinated causes, either known or unknown, but of which the existence is certain; and this series will permit you to ascend from ring to ring, not in the past, but in the present, until you finally arrive at the primary source of all activity, without which the animal itself and all vital functions as well as all causes which condition them could not exist." 46

What is the validity of this proof? Its basic principle is no less certain than that of the preceding proof. Just as there is a *becoming,* so also there are permanent and dependent existences. Starting from this as an established fact, the two principles by means of which we prove the existence of a first cause are nearly the same as those by which we conclude that there is a prime mover. The first principle is that whatever is caused, is caused by something else; nothing can be its own cause, since for anything to be a cause, it must first exist. The second is that there can be no regress to infinity in a series of essentially and actually subordinated causes. This proof, just like the preceding and succeeding ones, abstracts from the question whether the world is eternal or had a beginning in time. The difficulties that might be raised against it do not differ from those previously examined in connection with the prime mover. If this argument presupposes

45 Sertillangcs, *ibid.*

a morcellation, it is not the *utilitarian* morcellation of the *continuously sensible,* but the absolutely *necessary* morcellation of intelligible being. (See n. 21, 23 and 36, B, δ).

We are thus led to the *source of being,* to *a supreme efficient cause,* which has no need of being caused nor of being preserved in existence. It must, therefore, be identified with the prime mover, the source of *becoming.* Like this latter, and *a fortiori,* it must be self-operative, nay, it must be its own activity and exist *a se.*

In starting from the order of sensible things it was sufficient to consider the problem from the general point of view of *being,* which is common to both the corporeal and the spiritual, and we shall thus be able finally to arrive at a cause which appears not only as the primary productive and conservative cause of bodies, but also as the cause of everything which is not self-existent, of everything which is not its own activity, but passes from potentiality to act.

In fact, the unconditioned cause must be: (1) *pure act;* for, whether we consider it in its *being* or in its operation, in either case it is pure act, since it has never been reduced from potentiality to act (1a, q. 3, a. 4). By the very fact that it is being *a se,* we shall see from the fourth proof that it is the Being itself, for that alone is the *being a se* which is to *being* as A is to A. (2) It is *one, immaterial, intelligent,* like the prime mover, and for the same reasons, as the following proofs will establish more clearly. (3) It is *omnipresent,* since it must come in contact with all beings, not only to move them, but also to conserve them in being (1a, q. 8, a. x; q. 104, a. 1 and 2). (4) *Its creative potver is all-pervading.* The Being *a se,* the Supreme Being, which is the direct cause not of some mode of *being* (such as heat or light), but of *being* as such, is the cause of everything which is not its own cause, and it can be the cause of everything which is capable of existing. The Being *a se* endows everything with

reality and is the direct cause of *being,* just as fire is of heat, and light of illumination; it can endow with reality all things which do not involve a contradiction, just as fire can heat all things which are capable of being heated (Ia, q. 25; q. 45, a. 5).

38) *Proof based on contingency.*

We have just shown that the source of *becoming* and of *being* must be self-existent; but the existence of a necessary being can be proved *a posteriori* by starting with the principle, not of the dependence of *becoming* or of *being* on its causes, but of *being* considered in itself as contingent.

We observe that some beings are contingent, that is to say, do not exist forever, but, on the contrary, are born and die. Of such a nature are the minerals which decompose or form a constituent part of fresh matter, such as plants, animals, and human beings. This we know to be a fact. From it we proceed to deduce the existence of a necessary being, of one which always existed *a se* and cannot cease to exist. It is only a self-existent being that can explain the existence of beings which can either exist or not exist. The principle upon which this proof is based is the metaphysical principle of causality in its most general form. It may be stated as follows: That which has not a sufficient reason for its existence in itself, must have this reason in something else. And this other being, in the final analysis, must exist of and by itself, for if it were of the same nature as contingent beings, far from explaining the others, it would not be able to explain itself. And—we say it again—it does not matter whether the series of contingent beings is eternal or not; if it is eternal, it is eternally insufficient, and always demands a necessary *being.*

St. Thomas develops this proof more fully by taking into consideration the time element. After having established the existence in the world of beings which begin to exist, and then

cease to exist—that is to say, of *contingent* beings—he remarks that if there were none but contingent beings, it would be impossible for them to have existed always. To exist without a beginning cannot properly be said of any but self-existent beings, and this could not apply to a series of contingent beings, unless they received their existence from a self-existent, or, in other words, from a necessary, Being. Hence, if there were in existence only contingent beings, there must have been a time when nothing at all existed. Now, "if at any particular moment nothing actually exists, then nothing can ever come into existence." Therefore, some necessary being must exist, that is to say, one which cannot not exist; if this being has not its necessity from itself, it derives its necessity from something else. But we cannot continue to proceed indefinitely in this process of dependence of being upon being, and hence we must conclude that there exists a Being which is necessary of and by itself, and which explains the being and continuance of everything else.

The objection is often raised that this demonstration makes scarcely any advance towards the solution of the problem, because it fails to establish conclusively that the necessary being is distinct from the world and infinitely perfect, but merely proves that there is some thing which is necessary. Cajetan replies that this proof may be considered as sufficient in the strictest sense, as the two preceding proofs established conclusively that the prime mover and the first cause are distinct from the world (because the world is subject to *becoming,* which the prime mover and the first cause is not), and the succeeding proof will demonstrate *a posteriori* the unity, simplicity, and absolute perfection of the necessary being.

It is now easy to demonstrate *a priori* that the necessary being, whose existence has just been proved, is not: (a) either an aggregation of contingent beings; or (b) the law governing such beings; or (c) a *becoming* underneath the phenomena, or a sub-

stance common to them; but (d) it is *Being itself,* pure being, absolute perfection.

a) The necessary being is not an *aggregation* of contingent beings. A series of contingent and relative beings, even if it were without a beginning, *i. e.,* eternal, could no more result in an absolutely necessary being, than could a numberless series of idiots result in an intelligent man. "But," it may be objected, "how can it be proved that a being is really and truly contingent? Is it not a semblance of reality, which is the result of our having abstracted it from the continuous whole?"[46] The kind of being here referred to, such as plants and animals, is at least a part of the continuous whole, but not the whole; moreover, it is a part which comes into existence and ceases to exist, and, therefore, is contingent. An aggregation of similar parts, even though infinite in time and space, could not constitute a necessary being. For a thing to have a semblance of reality, it would be necessary to add to these parts a dominating principle, be it either the law which governs them, or the process of *becoming* through which they must pass (creative evolution), or the substance common to all the parts.

b) The necessary being cannot be *the law* which unites contingent and transitory elements. For this law, in order to be the necessary being, would have to have its sufficient reason within itself and also contain the sufficient reason for all the phenomena that it has controlled, now controls, and will control in future. Now, a law is nothing but a constant relation between various phenomena or beings, and as every relation presupposes the extremes upon which it is based, the existence of a law presupposes the existence of the phenomena which it unites, instead of being presupposed by them. It exists only if they exist. Heat expands iron on condition that there are heat and iron. Energy conserves itself if there is energy.

46 Le Roy, *Rev. de Met. et de Mor.,* March, 1907.

It is objected that while the application of a law indeed presupposes the existence of phenomena which it unites, the existence of a law is independent of its application. We answer that what is independent of this application is the ideal existence of the law, its existence in a mind, to which there corresponds a hypothetically objective truth (for instance, if there are heat and iron, the heat will expand the iron). But it cannot be claimed that the *actual* existence of a law is independent of its application and of the existence of the phenomena which it controls. Now, it is the actual existence which the Pantheists have in mind when they say that the necessary being, *actually* existing, is nothing else but the law of phenomena. Eliminate the contingent existence of phenomena, and this necessary being, which is the law, is no more than a hypothetical truth, which demands an existing Absolute for its foundation (proof based on the eternal verities), but which cannot itself be that Absolute. We have previously shown (n. io) why heat in itself cannot exist in a state separated from the subject which it affects; its very concept implies a common matter, which cannot be realized without at the same time being individualized.

But the Positivists insist that it is a law which produces the phenomena that explain its presence, namely, the law of the conservation of energy, which is a primordial and universal necessity explaining everything else. If "nothing is lost and nothing is created," as this law affirms, then the necessary being is the material world itself, governed by this law. We have already quoted (see n. 35, towards the end) Boutroux's answer to this objection, as given in his thesis entitled, *La Contingence des Lois de la 'Nature*. First of all, to repeat briefly, this law, far from being a primordial necessity, is itself contingent; it does not contain its own sufficient reason within itself, and because of this, it demands an extrinsic sufficient reason, or a cause. If this law were necessary, like the principle of identity, it would not actu-

ally exist by itself, but, like every other law, would presuppose the existence of beings in which it is realized—in this case the existence of energy. Secondly, this law, far from being universal, is not even susceptible of strict verification in the inorganic world; biology cannot prove its existence, nor, *a fortiori,* can psychology. Thirdly, the laws which govern living beings, such as the sentient and the intelligent, cannot be deduced from this law. The combination of elements which produces life and sensation appears as contingent and demands a sufficient reason, which the law of the conservation of energy cannot furnish.

c) The necessary being cannot be the process of *becoming* (creative evolution) through which the contingent elements must pass, nor can it be their common substance. A well-known objection runs as follows: "Suppose every *being,* viewed separately, were contingent, it would have to be proved that the whole world, or all beings taken together, were also contingent. Does the real contingency of the world follow from the fact of its imperfection, or from the fact that the idea of its non-existence is not repugnant to reason? This brings us back to the argument of St. Anselm, that God really exists because the idea of his non-existence is repugnant to reason."[47]

In the fourth proof we shall establish the conclusion that the world is really contingent by reason of its imperfection. This conclusion may also be drawn from the fact that its non-existence is not repugnant to reason, and because there is no question here of an unlawful transition from the ideal to the real, as in the argument of St. Anselm. All that St. Anselm, starting from the purely nominal definition of God, could say, was that the most perfect *being* which can be conceived implies existence as an essential predicate in its definition, that is to say, it exists necessarily of and by itself, and not by another, *it is its*

47 Le Roy, *Rev. de Met. et de Mor.,* March, 1907; Schiller, in *La ReVue de Philosophie,* 1906, pp. 653 H.

own existence—if it exists. This proposition is strictly true, but it is purely hypothetical. The mistake St. Anselm made was that he wanted the proposition to be taken as an absolute or categorical one, and concluded from it that God actually exists. On the other hand, the definition of any finite being (even though infinite with regard to time and space, provided that it be not infinite considered as *being,* potentiality, intelligence, etc.), of a plant, for instance, or of an animal, or of matter, or of a spirit, in no way implies existence in its comprehension. Each of these beings is defined without regard to existence; its essence is conceived as capable of existing, and there are no grounds for asserting that its concept postulates *essential existence* or *aseity.* Hence we may legitimately formulate the hypothetical conclusion that *if this being exists,* its existence is not due to itself. This truth belongs to the ideal order or that of essences, and St. Anselm should have kept within this order.

Moreover, we make so profound a study of the subject in order that we may come to die conclusion that the necessary being can be neither the *becoming* which forms the substratum of phenomena, nor the substance common to them. In fact, it has been fully established in connection with the proof from motion, that *becoming* cannot have its *raison d'etre* in itself: (r) because it is a successive union of diverse elements, and to say that an unconditional union of diverse elements is possible is to assert that elements, in themselves diverse and not united, can unite themselves or succeed each other by themselves, which would mean the denial not only of St. Anselm's argument, but also of the principle of identity; (2) *becoming* is the transition from an undetermined to a determined state; to deny that it needs a self-determined cause, is to say that the greater can come from the less or being from nothingness. The imagination alone can combine the two words *creative* and *evolution,* but that which comes into being through evolution is not its own sufficient *raison*

d'être, and for anything to be created, this must be the case. (See Ia, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2um).

Finally, the necessary *being* cannot be a *substance common* to all *beings,* for such a substance would be the subject of *becoming.* Now, the process of *becoming,* as we have seen, demands a cause which is not itself subject to that same process. In such a case the necessary being would at any moment be deprived of that which, so far, it does not possess, and which it could not give itself, because the greater does not proceed from the less. The necessary being, which must be the sufficient reason for everything which now exists or will exist in future, may give, but it cannot receive; it may determine, but it cannot be determined; it must have of and by itself and from the start, not only in potentiality, but also in act, whatever it must and can have, Ia, q. 3, a. 6: "Whether there is a Composition of Subject and Accident in God?"

d) The necessary being is being itself, pure being, absolute perfection. Kant[48] maintains that we cannot argue from the existence of a necessary being that it is sovereign perfection, *ens realissimum,* except by unconsciously reverting to the ontological proof. He believes that he has proved this point by the simple conversion of a proposition. Let us, he writes, according to the rules of formal logic, convert the proposition, "Every necessary being is perfect," and it becomes: "Some perfect being is necessary." But in that case we should have no means of distinguishing between perfect beings, since each of them is *ens realissimum.* The converted proposition is, therefore, equivalent to the universal one that "Every perfect being is necessary," which is identical with the thesis of the ontological argument. As the transition from the first proposition to the second is effected by a process which is purely logical and according to rule, the truth or falsehood of the one is dependent upon the truth or falsehood of the

48 *Transcendental Dialectic,* ch. III, section 5.

other. Such is Kant's principal objection against the classical proofs for the existence of God, considered not according to their basic principle, which is that of causality, but according to that step in reasoning by which they proceed from die first cause to the existence of the perfect Being.

This objection is answered sufficiently by stating that St. Anselm was wrong in concluding that *"the perfect being necessarily and actually exists."* He ought to have been satisfied with affirming that "the perfect being is self-existent, *if it exists."* He could just as easily have proved *a priori* the hypothetical contrary, namely, "if a self-existent being exists, it is sovereign perfection." To establish the truth of this proposition is precisely what remains for us to do, having demonstrated by the argument from contingency that a necessary being *actually exists.* That the two concepts (necessary and perfect), the very definition of which reveals that they are essentially linked together by their very definition, are equivalent, is a legitimate assumption for those who, unlike Kant, admit that necessary realities correspond to necessary concepts of the mind, and that the *unthinkable* and the *impossible* are correlative terms. (Consult what was said *supra* in n. 17, 18, 19, and 21, concerning the objective validity of the principle of non-contradiction).

It is by the following *a priori* method of reasoning that the transition from the necessary to the perfect being is effected. We will content ourselves with giving a brief résumé of the teaching of St. Thomas, since the fourth proof will lead us *a posteriori* to the same conclusion.

1) The *self-sufficient being,* recognized as actually existing, implies existence as *an essential attribute,* which means that it must not only have existence, but that it must be *its own very existence* (la, q. 3, a. 4).

2) This *being,* which is its own existence, cannot belong to any species, nor to any genus; in fact, its genus could not be less

universal than *being* itself, since *being* is essentially predicated of it. Now, *being,* which admits of no extrinsic difference, is not a genus (la, q. 3, a. 5).

3) This *being* is *sovereignly perfect,* because a *being* which is its own existence must contain within itself the whole perfection of being *totam perfectionem essendi").* "All the created perfections," says St. Thomas, "are included in the perfection of *being;* for things are perfect precisely in so far as they have *being* after some fashion." (la, q. 4, a. 2). Every perfection (goodness, wisdom, justice, etc.) is a mode of being which is capable of existing —something which can participate in existence *(f'quid capax existendï").* Existence is, therefore, the ultimate act of every thing which can exist. It is the *maxime formale omnium:* the most formal of all things, the final determination placing that which is capable of existing outside of nothingness and its causes. But actuality is superior to, and more perfect than, potentiality; for the former is an absolute, whereas the latter is merely a relative thing. We must, therefore, conclude that *being* which is its own existence, is pure actuality and absolute perfection.

4) *This being is one of infinite perfection* (la, q. 7, a. 1). In truth, if self-sufficient *being* were limited in its *being,* it would merely participate in existence and would be a compound of essence as the limiting and of existence as the limited element. For this very reason, its essence would cease to be its existence, and could be conceived apart from its existence, and hence the latter could no longer be predicated except as something *accidental* to it. If the essence of the self-sufficient being is in no wise limited (as the being, the intelligence, and the potentiality of a finite spirit are limited), it must *a fortiori* be said that this being cannot be subject to material and spatial limitations. It belongs to an order which infinitely transcends both space and time, the infinity of which, if it were possible, would never be other than one of quantity, and not of quality, which is the

kind here in question. From the foregoing we conclude that just as A is A, so the self-sufficient being must be identical with its existence. The fourth proof will demonstrate this point *a posteriori.*

39) *Proof based on the various grades of being.*

The purpose of this fourth proof, as we have already remarked, is to seek for a sign of contingency in the ultimate profundities of created *being,* which the proof from motion did not touch. Approaching the subject now from the static point of view, we notice that *beings* happen to come into existence, or else to die. To prove their contingency, we have recourse to an observation which, though less convincing at first sight, nevertheless, has a deep significance and is more universal in its application than either motion, generation or corruption. We refer to the multiplicity of these beings, to their composite nature, and to the fact that they are to a greater or less degree, imperfect. This argument has been called the *henological proof* (A = one), because it proceeds from the multiple to the one, from the composite to the simple. Kant did not choose to criticize this argument. If he had studied it closely, he would undoubtedly have been less inclined to reproach modern Scholastics for continually falling back, either unconsciously or insincerely, upon the argument of St. Anselm. He furthermore did not perceive that this fourth proof prepares the ground for the fifth, which is that based upon the multiplicity of purpose in things or design in the universe. His objections against this last proof, too, are rather superficial.

Quite recently the following objections have been raised against the argument based upon the various grades of being: (1) The presence of imperfection in the world cannot be alleged as a proof of its contingency, for that would be a return to the ontological argument by combining the idea of necessary existence with that

of a perfect being.[49] (2) Strictly speaking, the greater and the less are predicated only of quantity, for quantity alone is greater and less. (3) This proof, like the previous ones, is based upon the postulate of morcellation. (4) It is difficult to conceive a typical essence for all things.

We shall see that the henological argument contains no feigned reference to the syllogism of St. Anselm, because this argument in reality is based upon the fundamental law of thought, which is the principle of identity. The supposed morcellation in this case is again that of intelligible being, and not that of the continuously sensible. Finally, a typical essence, separated from matter and of a higher order than the individuals which represent the species and the genera, can be required only for the transcendentals (being, unity, truth, goodness, intellect, vital relation to being, etc.),[50] which, by their definition, abstract from everything material, dominate the species and the genera, imply no imperfection in their formal concepts, and are realized analogically in various degrees. (See n. 29).

We shall first study: (a) the proof in its general outline, as sketched by St. Thomas, and we shall show that it leads to a *Primary Being,* absolutely simple and perfect, and consequently distinct from the world, which is composite and imperfect. This proof will then be more accurately defined by arguing that (b) the series of human intellects, though imperfect, can always advance towards perfection, until at last we come to a *Primary Intellect,* the source of all the others, (c) From a graduated series of intelligible beings, from eternal truths, we finally come to a *Supreme Truth,* a primary intelligible, which is the fount

48 Le Roy, *Rev. de Met. et de Mor.,* March, 1907.

00 We have previously explained (n. 29), that the intellect and the will are not, strictly speaking, transcendentals. For the latter dominate the genera and are verified proportionately in each one of them. Nevertheless, the intellect and the will are defined in relation to a transcendental, either to being or to goodness, and consequently, in their formal concepts, they dominate the genera, although, according to the *created mode* of their being, they belong to the genus of quality and to the species of potentiality or faculty.

of all truth, (d) From the yearning of the human soul for absolute goodness we conclude that there must be *a primary desirable object,* which is the source of all happiness, (e) From the fact that we feel morally bound to choose what is good and to fulfill our obligations, we argue that there must be a *Primary and Sovereign Good,* which is the foundation of all duties.

Thus we shall see that the proof based on the various degrees of *being,* or upon the actually existing and graduated series of transcendentals (being, unity, truth, goodness; intellect, vital relation to being; will, and vital relation to goodness) necessarily implies the proof from the *contingency of the mind,* based on the perfection of our intellectual and volitional activity. The above-mentioned proof also implies the arguments based upon the eternal verities, upon the sense of obligation which goodness inspires, and upon the yearning of the human soul for the infinitely good. St. Thomas has given us a detailed account of these proofs in his treatise on man (la, q. 79, a. 4), at the beginning of the moral part of his theological *Summa,* where he discusses sovereign goodness and beatitude (la Ilae, q. 2), and in his treatise on the divine and the natural law (la Ilae, q. 91).

Here, at the commencement of his treatise on God, he considers it sufficient to present the proof in its most general aspects and to conclude from the various degrees of goodness, truth, and perfection observed in the world, that there is "something which is *the* true, *the* good, *the* noble, and consequently, *being par excellence."* (la, q. 2, a. 3).

a) *The proof in its general outline.* It is important to determine exactly the starting point of this argument, which is that there are various grades of being. As St. Thomas expresses it: "Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like." (la, q. 2, a. 3).

Concerning the point that things can be more or less in a certain respect, one may profitably read the lengthy first article of

question 52 in the la, Ilae, in which St. Thomas explains and discusses the opinions of Plotinus, of the Stoics, and of two other writers quoted by Simplicius. Here, too, he explains how the "more" and the "less" degrees which are predicated primarily of quantity, continuous or discrete, are afterwards legitimately applied to qualities, such as heat and light, which are more or less intense, just as science itself, which is capable of progressing either intensively or extensively according as it becomes broader in its application or penetrates its subject-matter more deeply; for as science is always able to penetrate more deeply into its subject-matter, so also are virtues.

We can readily understand that *relative* qualities, which derive their specification from an object to which they refer (for instance, science and virtue), are susceptible of the greater and the less, not only with regard to the subject in which they are partially verified, but also in themselves more or less closely approach the term to which they refer.

As for the *absolute* qualities and characteristics, which bear their specification within themselves (such as being, unity, substance, corporeity, animality, rationality) they are not all susceptible of more or less, even with regard to the subject in which they are partially verified. The *specific difference* of any species whatever is, indeed, an indivisible. Either one has or has not the ability to reason, which is the specific difference in man; the reasoning faculty, of course, can be used and it can be more or less developed; but in every human being this faculty has the same proper object, namely, the essence of sensible things; the same adequate object, which is *being,* and the same specific capacity. Likewise, a *genus* is not, strictly speaking, realized in various degrees; for although it is diversified by specific differences, some of which are more perfect than others, these differences are extrinsic to it. Animality, for instance, or the sensitive life, applies equally to man and lion, for man is not more of an animal than

the lion; his animality, as such, is not more perfect, although he is a more perfect animal. In like manner, too, gold is not more a body or a substance than copper; a thing is or is not a substance or a body; it cannot be more or less so.

But when we come to those most general notes known as *transcendental!,* because they transcend the *species* and the *genera,* we notice that they are susceptible of greater and less, and it is these which constitute the basic principle of our proof. These notes *{being,* unity, truth, goodness), are not diversified, like the genera, by an extrinsic specific difference; for they all apply to that which distinguishes one *being* from another. We find them verified in each existing *being,* each in its own way and in different degrees, or, as we say, *analogically.* Thus, while animality (the sensitive life) applies in the same sense to man and lion; being, unity, and goodness are predicated of different beings on *various grounds and tn varying degrees.* The difference proper to each of these *beings* is still, in fact, *being,* since in its own way it is something one and good. A stone is good with its own kind of goodness, in that it does not deteriorate; a fruit is good with its own kind of goodness, in that it refreshes; a horse is good, because it can be used for a race or journey; a professor is good, because he has knowledge and knows how to impart it; a virtuous man is good, because he wills and does what is good; a saint is better still, because he ardently desires goodness. In like manner, too, what is truly good is of a higher order than what is useful or delectable, and an end is in itself better than a mere means thereto. Goodness is, therefore, realized in various degrees. The same is true of perfection or nobility. The plant is of a higher order than the mineral, the animal is superior to the plant, and man to the beast. Again unity applies more to the mind than to the body; for the former is not only undivided in itself, but also indivisible; one society possesses greater unity than another, one science more than another. Likewise, truth is susceptible of

various degrees, according to the *being* on which it is based and the firmness or necessity of the propositions in which it is couched. As St. Thomas points out,51 truth, being conformity of a judgment with reality, does not admit of greater and less in this respect, for either there is or there is not conformity between the terms. But if we consider the *being* that is the foundation of truth, there are various degrees for, "the things that are greater in being, are greater in truth"; that which is richer in being is also richer in truth. From the same point of view a first self-evident principle, necessary and eternal, such as the principle of non-contradiction, is truer than a necessary conclusion drawn from it, because it expresses conformity not only with some mode of being, but also with what is found to be more profound and more universal in reality, both possible and actual. A necessary conclusion is likewise truer than a contingent one, not only because it expresses conformity of thought with something transitory, such as the fact that Cæsar is dead, but also because it perfectly corresponds with something eternal, such as, for instance, that man is free.

Apart from any consideration of the scale of beings, we ourselves, in our own lives, are more or less good, true, or noble-minded, in proportion as we live in the way that we ought to live. If there is any question of morcellation here, it is evidently not that of the continuously sensible, and the subtlest criticism of the physical sciences can in no way affect this basic principle.

The actually existing and graduated series of transcendental notes of being, therefore, is the basic principle of this proof. From it reason deduces the existence of a *being* absolutely simple, absolutely true, absolutely good, a God who is Being itself, Truth itself, Goodness itself, and, consequently, sovereignly perfect. Have we here a veiled recourse to the argument of St. Anselm? Not at all.

61 *Quaestiones Disputatae, De Caritate,* q. i, a. 9, ad lum.

The principle by which we argue from the various grades of beings to the existence of God is this: "When a perfection, the concept of which does not imply any imperfection, is found in various degrees in different beings, none of those which possess it imperfectly contains a sufficient explanation for it, and hence its cause must be sought in a being of a higher order, which is this very perfection." As St. Thomas remarks: "More and less are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in different ways something which is the maximum" (1a, q. 2, a. 3). If we wish fully to understand what is the meaning, the validity, and the range of this principle, which contains in condensed form all the dialectics of Plato, it is Plato himself whom we must consult. The correct meaning which we shall afterwards give to this principle, will prevent us from following him in his exaggerated realism. The dialectics of Plato are the method by which the soul convinces itself of the reality of these transcendentals, or eternal types, which Plato called "Ideas." There is the dialectic of the intellect, which is based upon the principle we have just enunciated, and there is the dialectic of love, which implies the other, though not demanding the same amount of reasoning, and is within the reach of every soul eager for that Goodness which no particular good can satisfy.

This dialectic of love is found towards the end of Plato's *Symposium*. He says there that the soul must learn to love beautiful colors, beautiful forms, a beautiful body; but it must not stop at any one of these, for they are but a reflection of Beauty. It must love all beautiful bodies and thence proceed to love the soul, which is the principle of the life and beauty of the body. It must attach itself to beautiful souls, beautiful by their actions, and thence rise to contemplate the beauty of the various kinds of knowledge which engender beautiful actions, until, having advanced in knowledge, it finally arrives at that pre-eminent knowledge which is nothing else but the knowledge of beauty

itself, and it ends by knowing it as it is in itself. The dialectic of love ends with the natural desire (conditional and inefficacious, says theology) of seeing God face to face and of contemplating "that beauty which is without diminution and without increase; which is not fair in one point and foul in another; which is beautiful only at one time and not at another, beautiful in one relation and foul in another, beautiful at one place and foul at another, fair to some and foul to others; ... a *beauty which does not reside in any other being different from itself,* as, for example, in an animal, or in heaven, or on earth, or in any other thing; but which exists eternally and absolutely, by and in itself, *which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other things" {Symposium,* 211, C).

This dialectic of love is also discussed by St. Thomas at the beginning of his la, Ilae, in the *Treatise on Happiness,* in a series of articles entitled: "Whether Man's Happiness Consists in Wealth, Honors, Fame or Glory, Power, in any Bodily Good, in Pleasure, in Some Good of the Soul, in any Created Good?" His answer is always in the negative, and he maintains that it is only the absolute good [52] which can fully satisfy an appetite controlled by an intellect which knows not only some particular good, but *good in general.* This dialectical method is rigorous and proves apodictically, as we shall see, the existence of the absolute Good, provided we view this method as a simple application of the proof of God's existence which we are studying, and which presupposes the objective and transcendental validity of the first principles of reason.

If, on the contrary, we admit the primacy of the immanent method, if we maintain that, without it, "the dialectic (specula-

62 Thus there is natural happiness in God, known by means of His effects, and naturally loved above all things. There is supernatural happiness in God, intuitively known and loved supernaturally above all things.

tive) subtleties, no matter how long and ingenious, are of no more consequence than the throwing of a stone at the sun by a child;" if it is claimed that "the incontestable presence and the convincing proof of *being* are the result of action, and of that alone," [53] then no more than practical certitude can result from this dialectic of love, however learned it may be; and this certitude may perhaps be subjectively adequate, but objectively it is inadequate. (See *supra,* no. 6, and *infra,* n. 39 d).

But if it is true that the idea of goodness presupposes the simpler, more absolute and more universal notion of being; [54] if the will and love presuppose the simpler and more absolute activity of the intellect, which merely attains not the good, but also the reason for it; [55] if the intellect alone can receive *being* into itself, completely possess it, become one with it; if it is preeminently "the totally intussusceptive faculty," as explained by P. Rousselot in his book entitled *L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas,* p. 20; if die will, on the contrary, cannot receive *being* into itself in this manner, completely possess it and become one with it, but can only tend towards it when it is absent, and take delight in it when it is made present by an act of the intellect [56]—then the dialectic of love engenders a certitude which is objectively adequate and absolute, and this by reason of the dialectic of the intellect which it implies. And the fundamental principle of the latter is precisely the principle upon which our proof is based: "When there is a greater or less, when there are degrees in anything, then the perfect also exists; if, then, a certain being is better than a certain other, there must be one which is perfect, and this can only be the divine." It is in this way that Aristotle expresses with admirable precision the fundamental procedure in

68 Blondel, *l'Action,* p. 350.

54 "Being is prior to goodness"; Ia, q. 5, a. 2.

85 "The intellect, considered absolutely, is higher than the will," remarks St. Thomas; Ia, q. 82, a. 3.

88 Ia Ilae, q. 3, a. 4.

the Platonic process of thought, as presented in his treatise *Concerning Philosophy,*[61] in which he gives a résumé of the teachings of his master.[58] See also the text of Aristotle quoted by St. Thomas in his Commentary on the *Metaphysics,* Bk. II, ch. 4.

This dialectic principle, which constitutes the major of our proof, includes two other closely connected principles in the system of Plato. To say that there are *various degrees* of *being* is to say that there is *multiplicity,* and also that *there is a greater or less degree of either imperfection or perfection.* Hence these two principles: (1) If the same note is found *in various beings,* it is impossible that each should possess it in its own right, and what is not possessed by a being in its own right, is received from another and, therefore, is held by participation; (2) If a note, the concept of which implies no imperfection, is found in a *being* in an imperfect state, *i. e.,* mingled with imperfection, this being does not possess this note in its own right, but has it from another which possesses it in its own right. By means of this latter principle we argue not only from the multiple to the one, but also from the composite to the simple, and consequently from the imperfect to the perfect.

Let us examine these two principles more closely and see how they are connected with the principle of identity, which is the supreme law of thought.

1) If *the same note* is found *in various beings,* it cannot be said that each possesses this note in its own right, and what a being does not possess in its own right, it has from another by participation.[59] Phaedo is beautiful, but beauty is not something which is proper to Phaedo, for Phaedrus also is beautiful. "The beauty found in any corporeal being, is sister to the beauty found in all

67 Concerning this treatise of Aristotle consult Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote,* Vol. I, pp. 53-69.

68 This passage is quoted by Simplicius in his *De Coelo* (Aid. 6, 67, B); cfr. Fouillée, *La Philosophie de Platon,* Bk. I, p. 61.

69 See Plato's *Phaedo,* 101, A.

the others." Not one *is* beauty, but all merely participate in it, are a part or reflection of it. Phaedo cannot be the source of his own beauty any more than Phaedrus; but the beauty of both must be ascribed to a higher principle, to one to whom beauty belongs by his very nature, who is beauty itself. It is this point which St. Thomas emphasizes when he says: *"Multitudo non reddit rationem unitatis"* (multitude does not explain the reason for unity). That unity of similitude which is found in multitude cannot be explained by it, but presupposes a higher form of unity. And in his *De Potentia* (q. 3, a. 5), St. Thomas shows how this principle is connected with that of identity, which is the supreme law of thought and reality: "If *one* of some kind is found as a common note in *several* objects, this must be because some *one cause* has brought it about in them; for it cannot be that the common note *of itself* belongs to each thing, since each thing is *by its very nature* distinct, one from the other, and a diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects." Phaedo and Phaedrus cannot possess beauty *from themselves; what properly constitutes them as individuals* cannot explain why they are beautiful; for the individualizing traits in each of them are different, whereas both have beauty in common; *the diversity cannot be the reason of unity.* To say that Phaedo and Phaedrus are beautiful in and by themselves, would be to say that the diverse is of itself one with a unity of similitude, in other words, that elements *in themselves* diverse and not alike, are *of themselves* alike by reason of that which properly constitutes them as individuals. This would involve a denial of the principle of identity or noncontradiction. There is no recourse here to the argument of St. Anselm.

By means of this principle Plato argued from the multiple to the one, from the multiplicity of individual things to the existence of eternal types of things, to the idea of eternal Truth, eternal Beauty, and eternal Justice. But he found that there was still

a certain diversity, which led him to conclude that there is a supreme unity, which is the Idea of ideas, the Sun of the intelligible world, which was for him not the Idea of *Being,* but the Idea of *Goodness,* or of the plenitude of being. "In the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right . . 80 St. Thomas concludes in almost the same manner: "There is something which is the True, the Good, the Noble, and consequently, Being *par excellence,* which is the cause of whatever there is of being, goodness, and perfection in all things; we give the name of God to this cause."

It is objected that we can hardly conceive a typical essence for each thing. This difficulty embarrassed Plato, because he failed to distinguish clearly the transcendentals from the genera and species. It is a disputed question whether he made man out to be a separate entity, distinct from the idea of the Good, or whether he considered man to be merely a divine idea. Whatever opinion he held on this point, we may say with Aristotle,81 that only those characteristics whose formal reason *abstracts jrom everything material, can exist in a state separated from matter and individuals.* On the contrary, whatever in its concept implies a combination of material elements, is incapable of existing apart from matter and from the individual in which it is found. Flesh and bones, for instance, are implied in the concept of man. *Flesh* cannot exist except *as this particular flesh;* for flesh is something which is necessarily material and extended, and which has certain parts and a certain extent, and not any other. Flesh can be thought of separately *(separating,* apart from its individualiz-

60 Republic, VI, 109, B.

61 Met., Bk. I, c. IX, Leet. 14 and 15; Bk. VII, ch. X, Lcct. 9 and 10; cfr. St. Thomas, la, q. 6, a. 4; q. 65, a. 1, with Cajctan's commentary; q. 84, a. 7; q. 104, a. I.

ing notes, but it cannot exist apart from them *{separata}*.®2 The exemplars of material things can never be anything but *ideas,* not real types. This logical precision applied to Plato's principle saves us from following him in his exaggerated realism.

But the case is quite different with the characteristics which, according to what they formally denote, *abstract from all that is material,* and which, moreover, *transcend the genera and the species,* and for this reason are realized analogically in *various degrees* (as is the case with *being,* unity, truth, goodness, beauty, intellect. . . .). They can and must exist *apart from matter and from the individuals in which they are found realized,* in a being of a higher order who possesses these characteristics in the *highest degree.*

It is precisely for this reason that our proof does not start with a characteristic found *in the same degree* in various beings, *e. g.,* humanity. Such a characteristic is of necessity caused not in all save one, but in *all.63* One of these beings cannot be the first cause of the others, since it is of the same nature with them and just as indigent as they are.

The proof from the degrees of beings does not ascend from the multiple to the one, without at the same time ascending from the composite to the simple, from the imperfect to the perfect. It is not enough to posit as a principle that "if the same characteristic is found in *various beings,* it is impossible for each of them to possess this characteristic in its own right;" but we must add that "if a characteristic, the concept of which does not imply imperfection, is found to be present in a being in an imperfect state, mingled with imperfection, then this being does not possess it in its own right, but has it from another, to whom it belongs in its own right."

2) This second principle, implied with the first in the major

De Anima, Bk. III; Comment, *of* St. Thomas, Leet. *12.*
Caietan, la, q. 65, a. 1.

of our proof, has been expounded by Plato in his *Philebus, Phaedo,* and other dialogues. It cannot be said, he remarks, that Phaedo is beautiful without restriction, or that Socrates is great without restriction; 64 that the knowledge which men have is a knowledge without restriction. In them these qualities (beauty, greatness, knowledge) are not pure, but *mixed with their opposites.* In fact, Socrates is both small and great. He is great when compared with Phaedo, small when compared with Simmias, and therefore he has not the greatness which excludes smallness, but merely partakes of greatness in a measure. A man has knowledge of a certain thing and is ignorant of certain other things; his knowledge is mixed with ignorance; it is not knowledge without restriction, but a participated knowledge.

But how shall we proceed from this to affirm the existence of absolute beauty and absolute knowledge? The Cartesians often pass immediately from the *imperfect* to the *perfect;* they neglect to resolve these notions into those simpler and nearer to *being, composition* and *simplicity, admixture* and *purity.* That is why the Kantians reproach them for unconsciously having recourse to the ontological argument; in reality the Cartesians appeal to the principle of identity, but they fail to establish this fact.

To say *imperfection* is the same as saying *composition* or mixture of a perfection with that which limits it. The limit may be either the opposite of the perfection, as when Socrates is said to be great and small from different points of view; or privation, as when human knowledge which knows certain things, is said to be ignorant of certain others, which, however, it is capable of knowing; or negation, as when a human being has knowledge of certain things and is ignorant of certain others which are inaccessible to it. It makes little difference whether the limit which constitutes the imperfection be contrary, privative, or negative; what we want to know is, why it affects the perfections known

84 Phaedo, 102, B.

as beauty, goodness, knowledge. . . . Evidently none of these perfections *in themselves* imply a limit, least of all such a limit. *In itself,* beauty excludes ugliness, knowledge excludes ignorance or error, and goodness excludes egotism. To say that such is not the case would be to maintain that the *unconditional union of diverse elements is possible;* that the diverse is, of itself, one, at least with a unity of union; that elements, according to what constitutes them as individuals, though they do not necessitate their being united, are of themselves united. This would involve a denial of the principle of identity. If any one of these perfections does not *of itself* denote a limit, still less does it denote of itself a *certain fond* of limit, since this limit is subject to variation. There is progress in knowledge, and our goodness is susceptible to increase and decrease.

The union of a perfection with its limit, not being unconditional, therefore, demands an extrinsic *raison d'etre.* "Things in themselves different cannot unite, unless something causes them to unite." (Ia, q. 3, a. 7). To deny this would be to identify that which has not its own sufficient reason in itself, either with what is not self-determined (and has no need of a sufficient reason) or else with what *is* self-determined (and has no need of an extrinsic sufficient reason). To doubt this would be to doubt the distinction between what is self-determined and not self-determined. "Everything that is composite, just as every *becoming,* demands a cause." (See *supra,* n. 24 and 26.)

But this extrinsic *raison d'etre,* this realizing principle, or, in other words, this *cause*—where shall we seek for it? Could it be found in a subject possessing a perfection with its limit? Is Phaedo able to account for that imperfect beauty which he possesses? It is evident that Phaedo does not possess this perfection through that which constitutes him an individual, for two reasons. First, as we have already remarked, because what really constitutes him as an individual, properly belongs to him,

whereas beauty is found also in other beings. Secondly, that which properly constitutes him as an individual is something indivisible, which denotes neither more nor less, whereas beauty, even in Phaedo, has degrees. "Whatever belongs to a being by its very nature, and not by reason of any cause, cannot be either partially or completely taken away." 65 To say that Phaedo is beautiful in his own right, admitting at the same time that what properly constitutes him as an individual is something different from beauty, would be the same as saying that elements *of themselves* diverse *are of themselves* in some way one; that the unconditional union of diverse elements is possible—which would involve a denial of the principle of identity. "Whatever a thing may fittingly have, if it does not originate from its nature, accrues to it from an extrinsic cause; for what has no cause is first and immediate." ee

What is found in a being without properly belonging to it according to its nature, is something which has been caused in it. In fact, not possessing this characteristic of itself and immediately *(per se et primo),* it can possess the same only in a conditional manner, by reason of another, and, in the final analysis, from another which possesses the same *of itself and immediately,* as something belonging to its nature *("secundum quod ipsum est").* Wherever there is diversity or composition, it is conditional, until we finally arrive at pure identity. It is only the latter that is capable of self-existence, whose existence originates from its nature, which is to being as A is to A, which is *Being itself,* or existence itself, *ipsum esse subsistens.* Every limitation of an essence would involve positing in it a duality between that which is capable of existing and existence itself. In such a case, existence could be attributed to it only as something accidental or contingent, and we should have to seek for a higher cause, continu-

65 *C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. XV, § 2.
ee *C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. XV, J 2.

ing our search until at last we arrived at pure simplicity and pure perfection with no admixture of imperfection. Every limit imposed upon the supreme attributes of Goodness, Beauty, Knowledge, and Justice would mean the positing in them of a duality, and, therefore, of contingency. Thus the principle of identity again appears, not only as the supreme law of thought, but also as the supreme law of reality, and we have another refutation of Pantheism. The first of all beings is essentially distinct from the world, and this not only because he is essentially immutable, whereas the world is essentially changeable, but also because this being is by his very nature simple and pure, whereas the world is essentially mixed and composite. This, as we have already remarked, was the argument by which the Vatican Council refuted Pantheism. "God as being one sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world."[67] God is pure Being without any admixture of non-being. St. Augustine expressed this truth in almost the same words, both in his *City of God* (Bk. VIII, ch. 6) and in his treatise *De Trinitate* (Bk. VIII, ch. 4), and he combined the proof based on the degrees of being with the argument from motion, thus rendering his contention more striking. If a being, he says, is more or less beautiful at different moments, if its beauty varies, evidently it does not possess *beauty a se.* Since it advances from the less to the greater, it cannot give itself what it does not have, and so "there must be some being in which *immutable, incomparable, and pure beauty* resides."

This proof drawn from the degrees of being is even more convincing if we remark, with Aristotle, that the non-being which limits being is something intermediary between pure being and pure nothingness, called *potency.* A perfection which of itself implies no limit cannot be limited either by itself, or by any

0' *Cone. Vat.,* Scss. III, ch. I.

other perfection, or by pure nothingness, but only by something intermediary. Knowledge, for instance, is not limited by itself nor by another perfection, such as holiness, but by the restricted capacity of man to acquire knowledge, by our *potentia* for knowledge, which gradually attains to act. Similarly, existence, in which all beings participate, has various degrees, and is not limited by itself, but by the essence into which it is received, since essence denotes a capacity for receiving existence, *quid capax existendi,* and it is all the more perfect in proportion as it denotes a capacity less subject to restrictions, and susceptible of greater participation in the act of existence. The mineral and the plant participate in this existence, subject to the limitations of matter and extension; the animal, by the knowledge it acquires from sense perception, participates in the same in a less limited way; man transcends the limits of matter and extension, of time and space, since knowledge and desire in him, by reason of the soul, the spiritual part of his nature, may in some sense be said to be infinite; with those created beings known as pure spirits, since they are by nature pure and immaterial forms, limitation in the existence in which they participate can come only from this source; but that they are capable of existing is in them something finite; potentiality is included in the notion of their essence, an idea of limitation with regard to existence, which is their ultimate actualization. This composition, this duality, consisting of essence as limiting and of existence as limited, presupposes a cause, and, in the final analysis, a cause in which there is absolutely nothing of composition, which is not a combination of potentiality and actuality, a cause which is *pure actuality,* a cause which was always and in all ways self-determined, *pure being* to the exclusion of all non-being, and consequently *infinite perfection?*[3]

It is easy to see how St. Thomas was able to conclude that the First Being is not a body, since He is absolutely simple (Ia, q. 3,

[88] See *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 7, a. 1.

a. i) ; that He is not composed of essence and existence, but that He is Existence itself (la, q. 3, a. 4); that He is not composed of genus and a difference (la, q. 3, a. 5) ; that He is sovereign goodness, absolute plenitude of being (la, q. 6, a. 2); that He is infinite (la, q. 7, a. 1); that He is supreme truth (la, q. 16, a. 5); that He is invisible (la, q. 12, a. 4), and that He is incomprehensible (la, q. 12, a. 8).

Let us now consider the different applications and more precise determinations of this general proof, by means of which we conclude that there is not only a First Being, but also a First Intellect, a First that is intelligible, a First that is desirable, the source of all happiness, the First and Sovereign Good, and the fundamental reason of all our obligations.

b) *The first intellect.* St. Thomas (la, q. 79, a. 4) applies the proof based on the degrees of being to the intellect and, like St. Augustine, combines it with the proof based on motion.®8 "That which *participates* in a perfection, that which is *mobile* and *imperfect,* necessarily depends upon that which is the *essence of this perfection,* upon that which is *immovable* and *perfect.* Now, the human soul participates in the intellectual life, and is intellectual only in the noblest part of its being. It attains to the knowledge of the truth only by the gradual process of reasoning. Finally, it has but an imperfect knowledge of things; it does not

eo must observe," he says, "that above the intellectual soul of man, it is necessary to posit a superior intellect, from which the soul obtains the power of understanding. For what is such by *participation,* and what is mobile, and what is imperfect, always requires the pre-existence of something *essentially such,* immovable and perfect. Now, the human soul is called intellectual by reason of a participation in intellectual power, a sign of which is that it is not *wholly intellectual,* but only in part. Moreover, it reaches to the understanding of truth by arguing, with a certain amount of reasoning and movement. Again it has an imperfect understanding, both because it does not understand everything, and because, in those tilings which it does understand, it passes from potentiality to act. Therefore, there must needs be some higher intellect, by which the soul is helped to understand." And this supreme understanding must be the subsistent Intelligence, *ipsum intelligere* (la, q. 14, a. 4).

know everything about them; and it has a confused apprehension of things known before acquiring a distinct knowledge of them. Therefore, there must be some intellect higher than that of any human soul, which is pre-eminently intellection, and which is immovable and perfect," and which was always in possession of all knowledge as something distinct from everything knowable. (See Ia, q. 14, a. 4; q. 79, a. 4). Such an intellect is demanded to explain the origin of human understanding, manifold and imperfect as it is, and without the concurrence of this intellectual light nothing intelligible could be known by us, just as without the light of the sun there could be no such thing as the sense perception of color.

This application of the proof presents no difficulty if we recall to mind what we previously said (n. 29) concerning the understanding. It is a notion which, according to what it formally implies, does not belong to any *genus.* Since it is defined by reason of its relation to *being,* it is, like *being,* analogous. That is why it can be realized in various degrees, and in the highest degree can exist in a *pure state,* not subject to any potentiality or limitation.

Need it surprise us that the supreme intelligence is identified with *being* itself? By no means. If there were duality here, we should have to keep on seeking for a higher cause, until we finally arrived at pure identity.

Plotinus and Spencer raised the objection that knowledge necessarily implies a duality of subject and object. This objection in its various forms has been refuted by St. Thomas (see Ia, q. 14, a. 1-4). He commences with a consideration of man, in whom knowledge implies such a duality. Man, he remarks, is intelligent in proportion as he is immaterial, in so much as his form, which transcends matter, space, and time, enables him to know, not only this or that particular and contingent being, but *being in general.* And since man is not being, the intellectual faculty is

in him merely a potentiality, which is in relation to *being,* something intentional. It is an accident of quality, and the act of understanding in human beings is merely an accidental act of this potentiality. The *self-subsisting Being* must also be intelligent, in proportion as He is immaterial, and since, according to the definition, He is independent not only of all material and spatial limitation, but also of every limitation on the part of essence, He is not only sovereignly intelligent, but the intellect and its act in Him are identical, that is to say, He is Being itself in the highest degree of intelligibility, always actually known, a purely intellectual and eternally subsisting light. Let us not search here for the duality of subject and object, which is the result, as St. Thomas remarks, of potentiality (or imperfection), in fact of both, "because from this only it follows that sense or intellect is distinct from the sensible or intelligible object, in that both are in potentiality" (Ia, q. 14, a. 2). Even in the act of our intellection, the intellect and its object, insofar as it is known, are identified; and Cajetan, in his Commentary on the *Summa of* St. Thomas (see q. 79, a. 2, no. 19), points out, as Averroes had done before him, that the intellect *does not receive* the object as matter receives the form, thus constituting a composite with the latter. No; the intellect *becomes* intentionally the known object *("fit aliud in quantum aliud":* it becomes that which as such is something other than itself"). In the act of reflection, the intellect in the act of knowing is identified with the intellect knowing this of itself. That this duality still remains is due to the fact that our intellect is not *of itself and always* in the act of knowing and actually being known. In God there is absolute identity between the pure intellect and pure being, which is the object of the intellectual act.

We shall see that this conclusion is no less evident if we take as the basis of our argumentation not the primary intellect, but

the primary intelligible. For a being to be pure act from every point of view, it must be always intelligible, not only in potentiality, but also in act; in fact, it must be always actually known *(intellectum in actu).* Now the intelligible always actually known is nothing else but eternal intellection.70

What has just been said is as certain as the absolute certainties of the positive sciences, for this excellent reason that the intellect perceives it immediately in *being,* which is its formal object. It is a fruit of purely intellectual light. This *analogical* attribution of intelligence to God is certain in the strictest sense of the term. The same must be said of the *formal reason* of existence, which is independent of its *created mode* (limited by the potentiality of the essence into which it is received). In like manner, the *formal reason* of intellection is independent of its *created mode,* which declares such intellection to be the accidental act of a faculty and assigns it to a category, namely, that of "quality," which is distinct from the category of "substance." In God, intellection is His very nature, that is to say, Being itself (la, q. 14, a. 2 and 4). This identification of being and intellection is not, therefore, due solely to the fact that a proof based upon their common traits *(ex communibus')* makes it a necessity (for there can be no question either of duality or of multiplicity in the Absolute), but this identity is postulated by the formal reason of each of these two perfections *(ex propriis').* Pure thought, of itself and always in act, must be pure *being* actually known; and pure *being* of itself and always in act from every point of view, must be the intelligible in act and intellection in act. Wherever there is a duality of subject and object, the understanding is imperfect and to a certain extent unsatisfactory. The created intellect would like to establish an immediate contact with *being,* without having to

το " *"Εστιν ή voyais voyaeus* vôijffcs; its thinking is a thinking on thinking." Aristotle, *Met.,* XII, c. ix.

question itself about the validity of the representation by means of which it apprehends *being.* This unsatisfactoriness,[71] which is common to every created intellect, will be dispelled only by the beatific vision, in which there will be no intermediary idea between the human intellect and the divine essence (la, q. 12, a. 2); this condition never existed for God, since it is in Him alone that intellect is identical with *being,* because in Him alone the intellect is in a *pure state.*

c) *The first intelligible, the first truth, source of all truth.* The proof for the existence of God based on the degrees of *being,* developed in the la, q. 2, a. 3 of the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas, ascends not only to a first being, but to a first truth, which is the ultimate basis of all other truths. "In beings there is found something more or less true. But *more* and *less* are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in different ways something which is the maximum. There is, therefore, something which is most true. Now, what is called maximum in any genus is the cause of all comprised in that genus." (la, q. 2, a. 3). Sometimes people are surprised at not finding in the writings of St. Thomas the proof for the existence of God based on the eternal verities, which was a favorite one with St. Augustine,[72] St. Anselm, Descartes, Bossuet,[73] Fénelon,[74] Malebranche and Leibniz.[75] Even Kant, in 1763, when he wrote his treatise on *The Only Possible Foundation for the Proof of God's Existence,* described the argument based on the eternal verities as

71 It is quite compatible with the condition of absolute certitude and merely denotes the imperfection inherent in the nature of a created intellect, especially of one which is united with a body.

72 See *Contra Academicos,* Bk. Ill, c. xi, no. 25; *De Trinitate,* Bk. XV, c. xii, no. 21; *De Vera Religione,* c. xxx to xxxii; *De Libero Arbitrio,* Bk. II, c. viii, no. 20; c. ix, no. 26; c. xii, no. 24; c. xiii, no. 36. Cfr. Portalié in the *Diet, de Thiol. Cath.,* art. *"Augustin."*

73 *Connaissances de Dieu et de soi-même,* ch. iv; *Logique,* I, c. xxxvi.

74 *Traité de l'Existence de Dieu,* Part II, ch. iv.

75 *Noue. Essais,* Bk. IV, c. ii.

the only rigorously compelling one. The possible, he said, which is given with thought itself, presupposes *being,* for "if nothing exists, nothing is given which may be the object of thought." He declared it to be an established fact that the Absolute, which is the ultimate basis of possible things, is unique and simple, and confirmed his proof by showing the unity and harmony which exist in the infinite world of essences or possibles, for instance, in mathematics. The proportions, the connections, the unity revealed by these ratiocinative sciences, were for him a proof that the ultimate basis of the possibles is unique and infinite, nay more, that it is an intelligence, since these harmonies are of the intelligible order.

The argument based on the eternal verities is to-day defended by many Scholastics.[76] Its validity was formerly denied only by the Nominalists,[77] who regarded the universal as nothing but a collection of individuals. If such were the case, and all the individuals of a species disappeared, it could no longer be said that there was any real truth in the propositions formulated about their specific nature.

St. Thomas has often pointed out that, just as in the order of *being* and goodness, there is a certain hierarchy also in the order of truth. Contingent truths or facts are of the lowest degree; above these rank the necessary conclusions of the sciences, and in the highest place are the first principles. Moreover, St. Thomas does not hesitate to say that the necessary

76 KJeutgen, *Philosophie Scolastique,* Bk. IV, Diss., Ch. ii, a. 4; Lepidi, *Elementa Philosophiae Christianae, Onto!.,* p. 35, *Logic.,* p. 382: Schiffini, *Prine. Phil., I,* no. 482; Hontheim, *Theologia Naturalis,* p. 133; De Munnynck, *Praelectiones de Dei Existentia,* p. 23. Sertillangcs has given an admirable exposition of this proof in an article which appeared in the September number, 1904, of the *Revue Thomiste,* entitled, *"L'Idée de Dieu et la Vérité"* reproduced in the author's book, *Les Sources de Notre Croyance en Dieu.* It was severely criticized by the *Revue Néo-Scolastique.* The doctrine propounded in this article is, however, absolutely in conformity with the teaching of St. Thomas.

77 Cfr. Soncinas, O.P., *In V Metaph.,* q. 30, and *In IX Metaph.,* IV and V.

truths would remain as objective truths even if all contingent reality disappeared. If, for example, all human beings ceased to exist, it would still be true to say that rationality is a specific characteristic of human nature. *"Remotis omnibus singularibus hominibus adhuc remaneret rationabilitas attribuibilis humanae naturae"* St. Thomas says in his *Quodlibeta,* VIII, q. i, art. i, ad tum. He repeats the statement in his answer to the third objection *(ibid.,* ad 3um). It is worth while to read this article, in which he distinguishes human nature in three ways: (i) as it exists in individuals; (2) as it is in itself, and (3) as it is in the divine intellect.[78] Concerning these eternal truths, which are independent of all contingent existence, the following authors may be consulted: Albert the Great, *Tract, de Praedicamentis,* c. ix; Capreolus, I, dist. 8, q. 1, conci. 1; II, dist. 1, q. 2, a. 3; Cajetan, *De Ente et Essentia,* c. iv, q. 6 (the real is of two kinds: the possible real and the actual real; the possible is not merely the *thinkable,* or the *ens rationis)* ; Soncinas, *In Met. IX, c.* iv and v; V, q. 30; Ferrariensis, *Comment, in C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. 52 and 84; Soto, *Dialectica Aristotelis,* q. ia, towards the end; Suarez, *Disp. Met.,* Vol. I, p. 230; Vol. II, pp. 231, 294-298; Bannez, *In lam.,* q. to, a. 3; John of St. Thomas, *Logica,* q. 3, a. 2; q. 25, a. 2; Goudin, *Logica,* p. 256. We now understand how Leibniz could have written as he did in his *Neu/ Essays,* Bk. IV, c. ii, and also in his *Theodicy,* § 184: "What the Scholastics called *constantia subjecti* (permanence of the subject) was very much

[78] Universals may be distinguished in four ways: (1) *in se* (or considered in the abstract) ; (2) *in re* or *a parte re!* (considered in the concrete or as individualized); (3) *ante rem* (as apprehended by the divine intellect before they are individualized); (4) *post rem* (as apprehended by the human intellect when individualized). (St. Thomas, II, d. 3, q. 2, 3, turn; la, q. 85, a. 2, ad 2um; *De Potentia,* q. 5, a. 9, ad t6um; *Quodl.,* 8, *I. c.)* It is the universal *secundum se* (as such), apart from the individuals in which it is found, that is here meant. Also, as Soncinas, O. P., remarked, only the Nominalists denied that necessary propositions arc eternally true. Ockham made their truth dependent upon the divine liberty.

discussed by them; what they meant by this phrase was that they could not see how a proposition formulated about a given subject can haye any *real truth* if the subject does not exist."

Banhez, in his commentary on the First Part of the *Summa Theol.* of St. Thomas (q. io, a. 3), formulated this common teaching of the Schools in three propositions, to wit: (1) The essences of things signified by those complex concepts are not eternal as to their existence (this is *de fide),* nor as to the essence of their being in them, because essence without existence is nothing actual. (2) That man is an animal is an eternal truth, if the word *is* implies that animality is an essential note of human nature; for it belongs eternally to the essence of man to be an animal. Note, however, that, with regard to creatures, this *esse* is not *esse simpliciter,* but *esse secundum quid,* for it is *esse in potentia.* (3) That man is an animal is not eternal, except in the divine intellect, if the word *is* refers to the truth expressed by the proposition; for truth resides in the intellect, but eternal truth resides only in the divine intellect. The few contemporary authors who refuse to accept the proof based on the eternal verities, and who claim that it is foreign to the teaching of St. Thomas, fail to see that it is according to the tenor of the third proposition of Bannez that St. Thomas speaks in his *De Veritate* (q. 1, a. 4, 5, 6 and *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 16, a. 6, 7, 8), whereas it is in accordance with the second proposition that he writes in his *Quodlibeta,* (VIII, q. 1, a. 1, ad turn and ad 3um). St. Thomas, therefore, admits the final conclusion arrived at by Bannez, that *"from these conclusions it follows that the essences of things are* real beings *before they exist, insofar as real being is distinct from imaginary being [ens rationis,* or what is merely thinkable]; *but not insofar as it is distinct from actually existing being, according to Cajetan's distinction as given in De Ente et Essentia,* c. iv, q. 6."

Suarez justly remarks that "certain modern theologians ad-

mit that necessary propositions are not perpetually true, but that they *commence to be true* when they become a reality, and cease to be true when the things cease to exist. But this opinioh is in direct conflict, not only with that held by modern philosophers, but also by those of ancient times, and even by Fathers of the Church. . . ." Then follow quotations from St. Augustine and St. Anselm.[79] The propositions: "Every being is of a determined nature," "Everything has its sufficient reason," "Man is free," "We must do what is good and avoid what is evil," unlike certain others, *e. g.:* "Every Frenchman has a right to vote," have always been true, *from all eternity.* The copula *is* does not denote that the two extremes are really and actually united in an existing reality, but merely that the predicate necessarily *refers* to the subject, regardless of whether the latter exists or not.

These truths are conditional, so far as existence is concerned, but they are absolute in the order of possibility and intelligibility, and consequently *dominate* the contingent realities and control the future. They state, as Leibniz remarks, "that if the subject ever does exist, it will be found to be such." *(Nouv. Essais sur l'Entend.,* Bk. IV, ch. ii).

Only consistent Nominalists can deny this conclusion; but then they must, like the Positivists, end in rejecting the absolute necessity of the first principles of reason, as if in some unknown world there could actually be effects without a cause or realized contradictions.

Starting from this point, can we prove the existence of God? Leibniz no more doubts than does St. Augustine that "these necessary truths, being *prior* in existence to contingent beings, must certainly have their foundation in the existence of a necessary substance" *(ibid.)* and as intelligible truths must be known from all eternity. Bossuet beautifully says that "even if there were no such thing in nature as a triangle, it would still remain

[79] *Diep. Met.,* Vol. II, p. 294.

indisputably true that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. What we see of the nature of the triangle is certainly independent of every existing triangle. Moreover, it is not the understanding that gives truth to *being;* even if the understanding were destroyed, these truths would still remain immutably the same." *{Logique,* I, 36). Again: "If I ask myself where and in what subject these truths subsist as eternal and unchangeable, I am obliged to avow that there is a *being* in whom *truth eternally subsists and is always known;* and this *being* must be Truth itself and in possession of all truth." *{Connaissances de Dieu et de Soi-même,* IV, 5). And again: "It is to this intellectual world that Plato sends us, if we would know what is truth. If he went too far in his reasoning, if he thought from these principles that souls have innate knowledge, ... St. Augustine has shown us how to adhere to these principles without falling into extreme and untenable views." *{Logique,* I, 37).

This proof is truly one *a posteriori* (from intelligible effects), and not *a priori* (like the argument of St. Anselm). It does not start from the notion of God, but from the multiplicity of rational truths arranged in ascending order, until it finally reaches the source of all truth. This proof, whatever may have been said about it, was not unknown to St. Thomas. In *C. Gentes,* Bk. II, c. 84, he explicitly states that "from the fact that truths known by the intellect are eternal with regard to what is thus known, one cannot conclude that the soul is eternal, but that the truths known have their *foundation in something eternal.* They have their foundation in that *first Truth* which, as the universal cause, contains within itself all truth." 80

Why did St. Thomas not develop this Augustinian argument in the article which he set aside for a special discussion of the

80 St. Thomas also admits that the immortality of the soul can be proved from the knowledge we possess of the eternal truths. (See C. *G.,* Bk. II, ch. 84). Cfr. the Commentary of F^rrariensis and Lepidi's *Examen Ontologisnu,* p. 120.

proofs of God's existence? The reason is because this proof can be referred back to the *fourth,* which establishes the presence not only of a Primary Intelligence and of a Primary Being, but also of a Primary Truth *(maxime verum).*

In the manifold and necessary verities made known to us by reason, there is a common element, that of necessary and eternal verity, which is realized in each in varying degrees. It is found in a more perfect degree in a first principle than in a conclusion. How are we to account for this element? Manifestly it is not to be explained by the contingent realities regulated by it. Just as Phaedo has not in himself the ultimate reason for his beauty, so also he cannot be the principle of contradiction which is found realized in him as in every other being, both actual and possible. Neither can our manifold and contingent intelligences account for this common and necessary element, since it regulates all of them, instead of being regulated by them. Shall we say that the eternal verities subsist apart from one another, independendy of things and of contingent intelligences? This would be a reversion to those eternal types which Plato seems to have admitted, and we have stated why the transcendentals alone are capable of realization apart from matter and individuals, and why they are identified *ex propriis* (that is, *intrinsically)* with the primary being and the primary thought. It suffices to point out here that the eternal verities cannot possess, each in *itself,* the ultimate reason of their necessity, since they are many and constitute a series of an ascending order; they necessarily presuppose a *supreme truth,* a *primary ens intelligibile,* which is the source of all intelligibility, the *maxime verum* of which St. Thomas speaks.

This *maxime verum* cannot be merely what is potentially intelligible; it must be of itself and always intelligible, nay, actually known by the intellect. For this reason, as we have already seen, it is identified with the primary intelligence, which is pure

understanding. Hence it appears *a posteriori* that the primary intelligence is infinite; in fact, the laws of the intelligible order, such as, for instance, of geometrical figures, are everlasting. Moreover, the least of things contains an infinite number of details, so that we can never know all about anything. This elusive element is nevertheless intelligible in itself, and its derived intelligibility must of necessity come from an intellect that is always in action. Act always precedes potency. Revelation says the same, for we read in the prologue of St. John's Gospel that "all things were made by Him [the Divine Logos]: and without Him was made nothing that was made."

It is impossible to admit with the Pantheists that the principle of the ideal order is immanent in the world, and would have no existence apart from the concepts formed of it by the human mind. If we grant that this principle is necessary and universal, we must admit that it is *independent of* our intellects, which are regulated by it. The contingent, being essentially dependent upon the necessary, cannot condition the existence of tire latter. To say that it does, would be the same as saying that the contingent, which is not its own cause, is the cause of the necessary, which would be absurd. Just as *becoming* cannot be the cause of *being,* so multiplicity cannot be the *raison d'etre* of unity.

But how can all intelligibles be contained in the primary intelligible—the το πρώτον νοητόν? 81 St. Thomas has explained this in his treatise on the Divine Knowledge.82 This primary intelligible is the Divine Essence itself. To know this essence adequately and exhaustively, is to know everything that it contains virtually and eminently, which means everything that can resemble it by way of analogy, that is to say, not only all actual, but also all possible, realities.

d) *The primary and sovereign good, the primary object of*

81 Aristotle, *Met.,* XII, c. vii.

82 Sec *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 14, a. 1–16.

desire. St. Thomas by the *via quarta* also rises to the *maxime bonum, i. e.,* Sovereign Goodness. That which is good may be considered as simply *desirable, i.e.,* capable of attracting our appetite, of filling a void in us, of making us truly happy, and also as that which *has a right to be loved,* and which imperiously compels our love, and is the basis of duty. The argument which concludes that there is a first and sovereign good, therefore, implicitly includes that by which we rise to the primary object of desire, το πρώτον *ορικτόν* of (Aristotle), the source of all happiness; [83] and it also includes the argument by which we prove that there is a sovereign good, the foundation of all duty, το ἀγαμόν *και το* ἀριστον.[84]

We may arrive at a knowledge of the supreme good, which is the source of perfect and unalloyed happiness, by arguing from the various kinds and degrees of goodness in created things, or else from the fact that these various kinds of goodness do not satisfy the natural desire of men.

If we start from the idea of the various kinds of finite goodness in beings, such as health, the pleasures of the body, wealth, power, glory, scientific knowledge, the joys of the mind and of the soul, we must insist upon their multiplicity and still more upon their imperfection, *i.e.,* their limitation. Just as the multiple presupposes the one, the composite the simple, the imperfect the perfect, so we shall be led by reason to a Supreme Good, who is Goodness itself, without any admixture of non-goodness or of imperfection. This is the dialectic of the intellect.

If we start from the natural desire which finite goods cannot satisfy, then we must emphasize the restlessness which the soul

83 See St. Thomas, Ia, Ilae, q. 2, a. 8: "Concerning happiness: Whether it Consists in a Created or in an Uncreated Good?"

84 See Ia, Ilae, q. 91, a. I: "Whether There is an Eternal Law?" a. 2: "Whether There is a Natural Law?" q. 93, a. 2: "Whether the Eternal Law is Known to All?" q. 94, a. 2: "What Are the Precepts of the Natural Law?"

experiences as long as it has not found an infinite good, or a good free from imperfection. "Restless is our heart, until it finds its rest in Thee, O Lord," said St. Augustine.[85] The unsatisfied soul will seek to find its contentment in goods of a higher and still higher order. This is what is known as the dialectic of love. Does the unrest resulting from this dialectic prove that there is an infinite good? Yes and no. It may engender in the mind of him who experiences it a certitude which is *subjectively sufficient and objectively insufficient,* like the moral faith of Kant. The *exclusive* method of immanence, however scientific it may be, cannot go farther than this. Objectively sufficient certitude can be had only by recognizing the ontological and transcendental validity of those first principles of reasoning known as the principles of identity, of sufficient reason, and of efficient and final causality. (Cfr. *supra,* n. 6).

Hence the proof may be presented in the following manner:[88] Our will, which has for its object the universal good (not *this or that particular good* known by the senses or the conscience, but *the good,* according to what is implied by this term, and known as such by the intellect) cannot find its happiness in any finite good; for however perfect a finite good may be, it is infinitely inferior to that pure good which has no admixture of non-good, and which is conceived as such by the human intellect. An infinity of finite goods cannot satisfy the will, for this could never be anything but successive and potential, not an actual infinity of quality and perfection. This impossibility of finding our happiness in any finite good, thus proved *a priori* by St. Thomas, is also proved *a posteriori,* or by experience, as St. Augustine has shown in his *Confessions.* Therefore, the human will desires naturally (». *e.,* by its very nature) a pure good with-

86 Confessions, Bk. I.

86 Sec Si Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la Ilae, q. 2, a. 7 and 8.

out admixture of non-good, just as our intellect desires absolute truth without admixture of error. Can this natural desire be vain, as if it were merely a product of the imagination?

Certain theologians[87] maintain that the principle, "The desire of nature cannot be purposeless," is not certain for us except and until we have demonstrated that our nature is the work, not of chance, but of an intelligent and good God. Thus the proof based on the aspiration of the soul for the absolute good would have merely the force of a naturalistic argument, based on this induction: Throughout the vegetable and animal kingdoms we see that an object, *e. g.,* a food, corresponds to the natural desire which calls for it; it must be the same for man, since his natural desire cannot be frustrated.

We, on the contrary, believe in the absolute validity of this proof for the existence of God. If the demonstration of God's existence were a necessary pre-requisite before we could trust the *natural* tendency of our faculties, we might doubt the objective validity not only of our intellect, but also of the natural desire of our will. Moreover, previous to any demonstration of the existence of God we perceive clearly that our intellect and will cannot be the work of *chance,* the result of a fortuitous encounter. How could a simple principle, a principle of order as well as of intellect, ever have resulted from a multiplicity without order? To say that it could would be the same as saying that the greater can proceed from the less, *being* from nothingness. Finally, according to Aristotle, St. Thomas, and all the great intellectualist philosophers, the principle of finality is necessary and self-evident, like the principle of sufficient reason, from which it is derived on the same grounds as the principle of causality. (See *supra,* n. 27). A natural desire, therefore, cannot be purposeless, for if it were, it would be *without a sufficient reason,* and, as we have seen, for anything to be without a suffi-

87 De Munnynck, for instance, in his *Praelectiones de Existentia Dei.*

cient reason for what it is, is a contradiction. Also, by the method of *reductio ad impossibile* the principle of sufficient reason resolves itself into the principle of identity, (i. Everything which exists, has its sufficient reason, necessary for it as such, without which it could not be distinguished from that which is not. 2. Everything which is, but does not exist of itself, has its sufficient reason in something else, without which it could not be distinguished from that which exists of itself). This extrinsic sufficient reason is necessarily twofold: the one is a realizing or actualizing principle, which accounts for the existence of the thing (efficient cause), while the other explains the purpose of the action and why it is performed in this way rather than in any other (final cause). The necessity of die final cause is more clearly seen in the case of an *intentional* being, that is to say, a being whose whole nature is a tendency towards something else. We find it to be so with the natural desire which we have been discussing. This something which is *relative* and *imperfect* necessarily *tends* towards something else. Just as the imperfect cannot exist except *by* the perfect (efficient cause), so it cannot exist except *for* the perfect (final cause) ; for *the relative can exist only for the absolute.* In fact, it is only the absolute which has its own sufficient reason in itself. *"Potentia dicitur ad actum" i. e.,* a potency cannot contain its own *raison d'être* within itself. The natural desire for God, the natural inclination towards God, therefore, would be absurd if God did not exist; it would be an inclination tending towards something and at the same time towards nothing. It was in this sense that Hemsterhuys could say that "a single sigh of the heart for what is best and perfect is more convincing than a geometrical demonstration of the existence of God."

This demonstration does not differ from the *via quarta* of St. Thomas, which ascends to the primary good not only by way of exemplary and efficient causality, but also by way of final causality. This desire for God, from the very fact that it is some-

thing *imperfect* and *limited,* presupposes the *perfect,* just as the relative presupposes the absolute.

In presenting this proof we must bear in mind that there is question here of a natural and efficacious desire, and not of a natural desire which is inefficacious and conditional, like that which has for its object the beatific vision of the divine essence.

The Thomists [88] distinguish two kinds of natural love, one innate, the other elicited. The former precedes all knowledge, and is identical with the natural inclination of the will; the latter follows upon the apprehension of good. This elicited love is necessary, if it results from the simple apprehension of good without deliberation; in the contrary case it is free. Moreover, it may be either absolute and efficacious, if our nature furnishes us with the means of attaining the object desired; or conditional and inefficacious, if the object desired is beyond the reach of our natural faculties.

Now, according to St. Thomas (1a, q. 60, a. 5), every creature, each in its own way, by reason of an *inborn* natural inclination, loves God more than itself, that is to say, it is more strongly inclined towards the author of its nature than towards itself, just as a part is naturally more strongly drawn to the preservation of the whole than to its own preservation. Thus it is natural for the hand to expose itself in order to save the head. Moreover, every reasonable creature, with a love which is elicited and *spontaneous,* loves above all else the sovereign good which it seeks in all things, and which can be found only in God. By an elicited and *deliberate* act of natural love man can afterwards prefer God to everything else, and perceive that natural happiness is to be found only in the knowledge of God derived from His works, and in the love of God which follows this knowledge, and which implies all the natural virtues.

Finally, man can naturally conceive that it would be a good

88 See Billuart, *De Gratia,* diss. 3 and 4.

thing to know God, not only through His works, but immediately as He knows Himself. But it is beyond the scope of our nature to attain to this intuitive vision; and hence the natural desire for this object can only be conditional and inefficacious; *e. g.,* if God were gratuitously to raise me above my natural powers, so that I could see Him as He sees Himself, this would make me supremely happy. This velleity does not enter into our proof for God's existence, for, strictly speaking, it can be frustrated, since it depends upon the free will of God to comply or not to comply with it.[89] We are concerned here with a natural desire that is absolute and efficacious. The human will, on account of its universality, which accrues to it naturally from the universality of the intellect, anteriorly to any act, cannot be satisfied with anything less than a complacent love of the principle of all good, which alone is Goodness itself. This love of tire absolute above all things is also the basic principle, or at least the crown, of the great spiritual and moral systems of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, and others.[90] Immediate intuition of this Good (which is entirely a supernatural gift) is not necessary to make us love it. It is sufficient for us to know it through its works and to love it as the author of our nature. It is this Good which we love when we practice virtue and refer all our acts to it, and not to ourselves.[91]

e) *The primary and sovereign good as the basic principle of duty.* But the good is not only something to be desired, as capable of appealing to the appetitive part of our nature and making us happy; it is also something which *must* be the object of voli-

88 See Bannez, *In lam,* q. 12, a. I.

80 We even find it in the writings of Spinoza, though in a Pantheistic form.

81 On this natural love of God cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 6o, a. 5. —Concerning this proof for God's existence, cfr. Gardeil's article, *"L'Action, ses Exigences et ses Resources Subjectives"* in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1898 and 1899; also Scrtillanges, *Les Sources de Notre Croyance en Dieu,"* and our own recent works: *Le Réalisme du Principe de Finalité,* 1932, pp. 260-284, and *La Providence et la Confiance en Dieu,* pp. 50-64 (English tr., pp. 39-52).

tion and has a *right* to be loved, nay positively demands our love and constitutes the basis of duty.

St. Thomas expresses himself very clearly on this point in his treatise on law in the *Summa Theologica,* Ia IIae, q. 94, a. 2: "Whether Natural Law Contains Several Precepts, or only One?" He says that there are several precepts included in the natural law, but that they all refer to the same first principle of practical reason, which is "that good must be done and evil must be avoided." This first principle of conduct, he remarks, is based upon the notion of good, just as the first principle of the speculative reason, upon which all others of the same order depend, is itself based upon the notion of *being.* "That which first falls under apprehension, is *being,* the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever that a man apprehends. Therefore, the first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time; this is based on the notion of *being* and *not-being;* and on this principle all others are based, as is stated in the Fourth Book of *Metaphysics.* Now, as *being* is the first thing which falls under simple apprehension, so *good* is the first thing which falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action; for every agent acts for an end which has the aspect of good. Consequently, the first principle of practical reason is one founded on the notion of good" (q. 94, a. 2).

In truth, it is not this or that good that *must* be done; it is that to which our nature by its activity is essentially ordained as to its proper end. Now, common sense, like philosophical reason, distinguishes three kinds of good: (1) *sensible* good, or that which is merely delectable; (2) *useful* good, by reason of the end; (3) *virtuous* good. The irrational animal finds its contentment in the first kind of good, and instinctively makes use of the second without perceiving the connection between it and the end in view *{non cognoscit rationem finis;* Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2).

It is man alone who, because of his reason, knows the *usefulness* or the sufficient reason of the means employed for the end. He alone knows and can love virtuous good. This latter appears to him as *good in itself, desirable in itself,* and this independently of the joy experienced in its possession and of any advantage to be derived from it. Such an end is good and desirable precisely because it is in conformity with right reason and appears to be the normal perfection of man as man *{qua* rational and not *qua* animal). It is *good in itself,* apart from the pleasure man takes in it and the advantages derived from it, such as knowing the truth, loving it above all things, acting always according to right reason, prudently, justly, firmly, and temperately. Moreover, this virtuous or rational good appears to us as the *necessary* end of all our actions and, consequently, as of obligation.[82] Every man understands that the acts of a reasonable being *must* conform to right reason, just as right reason itself conforms to the absolute principles of *being.* Hence it is that duty is expressed by the formula that "we *must* do what is good, and avoid what is evil;" "Do your duty, let happen what may." Pleasure and personal interest must be subordinated to duty; the virtuous must be preferred to the delectable and the useful.[83]

It is not a question here of something optional, but of something which is of obligation. In truth, it is by means of the *principle of finality* that reason validates its command; or, what comes to the same thing (as we have seen in n. 27), it is because of the division of *being* into potency and act that the will of a

82 St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 19, a. 4) explains how our natural reason is the *proximate rule* of our will, and how the *eternal* law is the *supreme rule.* They arc related to each other, in the moral order, as the primary and secondary efficient causes in the physical order. Just as, therefore, one can ascend in the physical order from secondary causes to the primary cause, so also in the order of moral causality. As for the supreme good and the various kinds of graduated good of the rational order, these belong to the order of final causality, and postulate corresponding active principles. (Cfr. also Ia IIae, q. 87, a. 1).

83 *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 5, a. 6.

rational creature *must* tend towards virtuous or rational good, in regard to which it has a right to be called a potency, because the very *raison d'être* of potency is to be found in the act *(potentia dicitur ad actum).* Potency does not merely come to an end in the act, it is *for* the act, just as the imperfect is *for* the perfect, and the relative is *for* the absolute. In truth, it is only the absolute which contains its own sufficient reason in itself. A will which is by its very nature *capable* of willing rational good, and whose natural *tendency* is towards this good, cannot refuse to will it, for that would mean a complete revocation of the very *purpose of its being.* The will is *for* rational good. This good must, therefore, be realized by that which can make it a reality and which exists *for* that purpose. The will considered from this point of view constitutes the *proximate,* though not the *ultimate,* basis of obligation.

The common opinion of mankind and the spontaneous promptings of reason confirm the conclusions of philosophy. Starting from this point, can we construct an argument for the existence of God? St. Thomas is just as certain as St. Augustine that we can. According to him, "the natural law, and especially its first principle, is nothing else but an *imprint* made on us by the Divine Light, a participation in the eternal law, which is in God" (Ia Ilae, q. 91, a. 2). "This eternal law is nothing else but Divine Wisdom, which directs all actions and all movements of creatures" (Ia Ilae, q. 93, a. 1). "Only God and the blessed, who see Him in His Essence, know the eternal law as it is in itself. But every rational creature knows it in its reflection, which is more or less brilliant. For every knowledge of truth is a kind of reflection and a participation in the eternal law, which is the unchangeable truth, as St. Augustine says *(De Vera Relig.,* c. XXXI." (Ia Ilae, q. 93, a. 2).[94]

[94] Comparing this passage with Ia, q. 84, a. 5, we see that St. Thomas refuted Ontologism in advance. *"Our soul/'* he says, *"has no objective knowledge of ma-*

If the natural moral law is a participation in the eternal law, which is in God, why can we not argue from the first to the second of these laws, and in like manner, from a consideration of the various kinds of goods which constitute the basis of our divers obligations, to the Supreme Good, which is our final end?

If we ascend by a sort of necessity from eternal truths to a supreme truth, upon which all other truths are based, why can we not ascend from the first principle of the moral law to the eternal law? We start here from practical principles, not from principles of the speculative order. The obligatory character of that which is good merely adds a new element to the demonstration, and this trait, manifested in the proximate foundation of the obligation, urges us on to seek for the absolute foundation.

As we remarked in the general proof, which includes all the others, if the virtuous good, towards which our nature is ordained, *must* be loved, apart from the satisfaction or advantages derived from it; if the *being* capable of willing it *must* will it, or else be purposeless; if our conscience proclaims this to be our *duty,* and afterwards approves or condemns without our being able to stifle remorse; if, in a word, the right of good to be loved and put into practice, *dominates* our activity in the moral order and that of actual and possible groups of human beings, just as the principle of identity dominates all the actual and possible realities—then there must have been from all eternity some foundation for these absolute rights of the good. For these necessary and dominant rights cannot have their *raison d'être* either in contingent realities dominated by them, or in those *many* kinds of good which, arranged in hierarchical order, are imposed *a priori* on human nature. These rights, since they are above

terial things in the eternal types," and it is not in the essence of God that we perceive the first principles, but the eternal types are the source of our intellectual knowledge, just as the sun is the source of our sense perception. "For the intellectual light which is in us, is nothing else but a certain participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal archetypes."

everything except the Absolute Good, can have their foundation only in the latter.

If, then, the *proximate* foundation of moral obligation is the essential order of things, or, to be more precise, if it is the rational good for which we are by nature and by our activity essentially ordained, then the absolute foundation of this obligation must be sought for in the Sovereign Good, which is our final objective. And this obligation could not have received its formal sanction except from a law of the same order as the Sovereign Good, that is to say, it could have come only from the Divine Wisdom, whose eternal law ordains and directs all creatures to their respective ends.

Thus we rise up to the Sovereign Good *(maxime bonum),* not only inasmuch as it is the *first* to be desired, the source of all happiness, but also inasmuch as it is the first Good *in itself,* and the absolute foundation of all duty. And this Sovereign Good, as we have seen, is identical with the First Being, the First Intellect, which is, therefore, entitled to be called the *First Lawgiver.* There is correlation in the order of agencies and ends, and the ultimate end becomes identified with the First Cause, in the moral as in the physical order.

The objection is sometimes raised that this demonstration of the existence of God implies a *petitio principii.* Strictly speaking, we are told, there can be no moral obligation without a supreme lawgiver, and it is impossible to feel oneself bound by a categorical moral obligation, unless one is aware that a supreme lawgiver exists. Therefore, the proposed proof takes for granted what is to be proved, and merely expresses in a more explicit manner that which it implicitly assumes.

In reply we may say that it suffices to show that there is a moral obligation because of its effects, such as, for instance, the remorse of conscience, and to prove that it has its proximate foundation in the essential order of things, or, to be more precise,

in rational good, towards which our nature is ordained as its general end. Thence we are led to seek for the absolutely ultimate basis of obligation—on the one hand, in the Sovereign Good which is our ultimate end, and on the other, in Divine Wisdom, which ordains all things for the Supreme Good.[95]

There is a certain connection between this last proof, based on the moral law, and that drawn from *moral sanction.* We can demonstrate *a priori* that the Supreme Lawgiver, whose existence we have proved, must also be the *Sovereign Judge,* the Rewarder of good and the Avenger of evil. He owes it to Himself, as intelligent and good, to give to every being all that is necessary for it to attain the end which He has assigned to it (Ia, q. 21, a. 1), and to give to the just that knowledge of truth and that happiness which they have merited. Moreover, loving the absolutely supreme Good of necessity and above all else, He owes it to Himself to make these rights respected and to punish their violation (Ia IIae, q. 87, a. 1 and 3).

But the existence of a Supreme Judge and of an eternal sanction can also be proved *a posteriori,* from the insufficiency of all other sanctions. This proof is the one which, according to Kant, engenders rational faith in the existence of God—a faith with a "certitude that is subjectively sufficient, though objectively insufficient." Kant's argument is well known. The existence of God, he says, and the future life are two inseparable assumptions upon which moral obligation rests. The moral law can be expressed by the formula: Do that which can render you worthy of being

95Cfr. Lehu, O. P., *Philosophia Moralis,* 1914, p. 250. "The proximate foundation of obligation consists in the essential order of things. Although it does not act except as a secondary cause, and dependently upon the first cause, yet it is truly and properly a cause in its own order, for by its very nature it establishes the necessary connection between the human act and the ultimate end. . . . The ultimate *formal* end, man's own and necessary perfection, may also be said to be the proximate foundation. But the ultimate foundation is *objective* happiness. . . . It is God Himself who is the ultimate foundation upon which obligation rests; He is the eternal law."

happy (for virtue and happiness are necessarily connected with each other by reason of a synthetic judgment *a priori).* Now, God alone can realize this harmony between virtue and happiness. Therefore, God must exist. The nobler the moral character of a man is, the firmer and more lively is his faith in everything which he feels himself obliged to admit from a *practically* necessary point of view.[96] This proof would possess sufficient objective certitude if the principle that "the just man must be perfectly happy," were self-evident *a priori,* that is to say, for us who do not admit that there are any *a priori* synthetic propositions, if it were analytic.

Without inquiring into the possibility of satisfying ourselves of the evidence of this proof before we are certain of God's existence, we may rest content in seeing in this proof, based on moral sanction, an *a fortiori* argument for the proof from the prevailing order of the universe, which we have still to discuss. If there is order in the material world, and if this order demands an intelligent designer, then, *a fortiori,* there must be order in the moral world, which is far superior to the physical. Therefore, there must be ultimate harmony between the moral law, which obliges us to practise virtue, and our natural desire for happiness. The just man must some day be perfectly happy.

The proof based on the sanction of the moral law may also be presented as an *a fortiori* argument for that proof, based on the natural desire of the heart for the supreme good. If this natural desire postulates the existence of this good and the possibility of attaining it, at least mediately,[97] just as the relative which is not its own sufficient reason for what it is, postulates the absolute, then, *a fortiori,* a deliberate and meritorious act on the part of the just man, which is something more than the natural desire

[96] *Critique of Practical Reason,* Bk. II, ch. 5.

[97] This means, through the mediation of created things; for the immediate possession of God cannot be other than supernatural and gratuitous.

common to all rational beings for happiness—must result in the possession of this *(natural')* happiness. This can be affirmed with a certainty which is objectively sufficient even before the existence of God has been scientifically demonstrated.

40) *Proof based on the order prevailing in the world.*

The fifth typical proof presented by St. Thomas is that based on the order prevailing in the world. The way for it has been prepared by the preceding proof, which concluded from the *multiplicity* in things to the existence of a *higher unity.* The present proof argues from the *orderly arrangement in multiplicity* to the existence of a *unity of concept* and an intelligent designer. We shall see that the argument can start not only from the order prevailing in the physical world, but from every being in which is found a part ordained towards another, whether it be the essence which is ordained for existence, or intelligence, which is ordained for its act *(potentia dicitur ad actum).* We shall thus be able to arrive at an intelligence which is its own understanding, nay, more, which is the always actually intelligible in contemplation of itself, that it is, self-subsistent Being. After a cursory *exposé* of this proof we shall show that it is rigorously exact in answering the objections raised against it.

The proof is presented by St. Thomas in this shape: "We see that things which lack intelligence, such as material beings, act in a manner conformable to their end, for we perceive that they always, or nearly always, act in the same way, in order to obtain the best results. Hence it is plain that they achieve their end not fortuitously, but designedly. Now, whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end unless it be directed by some *being* endowed with intelligence, just as the arrow is directed to its mark by the archer. Therefore, there is an intelligent being which directs all natural things to their end, and this being we call God."

This can be expressed more briefly if we begin with the major, thus: "A means cannot be directed to an end except by an intelligent cause. Now, we find in nature, in the things which lack intelligence, means directed to ends. Therefore, nature is the result of an intelligent cause."

This proof, of which Kant always spoke with respect, proceeds in a perfectly natural way from the spontaneous reason, when put in contact with the world, and it is historically one of the oldest proofs for the existence of God. According to Homer, Zeus is the designer, who arranges and directs all things, *(Iliad,* VIII, 22; XVII, 339). Among the Greek philosophers Xenophanes says that God "directs all things by the power of the mind." Anaxagoras was the first thinker who clearly distinguished mind from matter and placed intelligence at the source and above all things, over which it presides (see Aristotle, *Met.,* Bk. I, ch. iii). Socrates developed the proof from the final causes *(Memorabilia,* I, 4; IV, 3; *Phaedo,* 96, 199). He emphasizes the admirable disposition of the parts of the human body and the harmonious connection between means and ends. He sees in nature not only traces of intelligence, but also finds there the proof of a beneficent power, full of solicitude for men. *(Mem.,* IV, 3). He does not say that the phenomena come into existence of necessity, but because it is *good* that they should. Such at least is the résumé of the discourse of Socrates as recorded by Plato *(Phaedo,* 96, 199). St. Thomas repeats it: "Things which lack intelligence act almost always so as to obtain the *best* result." Plato *(Phaedo,* too) declaims loudly against those who, like Democritus, sought to explain the universe by ascribing it to a material and efficient cause without intelligence. In the tenth book of the *Laws* he argues from the fact that God has arranged all things in the world even to the smallest detail, and draws the optimistic conclusion that God ordained all things in view of the greatest possible perfection. The problem of evil is solved by a considera-

tion of the whole. Aristotle pointed out, and defended metaphysically the minor of this syllogism, namely, that "every agent acts for an end." [88] Regarding the major, his teaching is not so clear. According to Zeller, the God of Aristotle had no knowledge of the world. We do not think that there is anything in his text to that effect; in fact, several passages rather indicate the contrary. The controversies which have arisen on this point may be studied in Kaufmann's *La Finalité dans Aristote,* and in *Aristoteles Metaphysi/^,* by Eugene Rolfes (Leipsic, 1904). After the time of Aristotle the Epicureans again took up the doctrine of Democritus, whereas the Stoics developed the proof based on the final causes, insisting upon particular happenings in the universe; but they did not go farther in their reasoning than to establish the existence of a "world-soul," or an artistic fire, *trip τεχνικόν,* as they called it.

Among modern writers, Descartes, Spinoza, and, following them, the defenders of Mechanistic Evolution attacked the minor, which Leibniz defended by insisting upon the contingency of the order prevailing in the world. Kant attacked also the major, and was followed by those who, like Hartmann, are satisfied with explaining finality by an unconscious will.

We shall examine: (1) the principal objections raised against the minor, that "things which lack intelligence act for an end," and then (2) deal with the objections against the major, namely, that "things which lack intelligence cannot tend towards an end, unless they are directed by an intelligent being which knows this end."

1) The minor, as formulated by St. Thomas, concerns the *intrinsic finality* observable in the activity of all beings which, taken separately, lack intelligence. For instance, the eye is for seeing, and wings are for flying. Certain philosophers, *e.g.,* the Stoics, insisted just as strongly on *extrinsic finality,* which sub-

88 *'Omne agens agit propter finem." (.Phys.,* l. II, c. 3).

ordinates things to one another. Cicero writes: "The fruits of the earth are for the animals, said the Stoics; the animals are for man, the horse to convey him, the ox for ploughing the land, and man for contemplating and imitating the universe." [99]

Descartes objected to extrinsic finality. "It is not likely," he says, "that man should be the end of creation: how many things, indeed, are in the world, or were at one time, but are now no more, without any man ever having seen them or known of them, without having been of any use to humanity!" [100] Again: "It is absurd to claim that the sun, which is several times larger than the earth, has been made for no other purpose than to offer light to man, who occupies but a part thereof."

In answer to this objection we must say that final causes have been abused, and that the *extrinsic* finality of things often escapes us. But their *intrinsic* finality is a certainty, as Descartes himself recognized, saying: "In the admirable purpose assigned to each part, both in plants and animals, it is proper to admire the hand of God who made them, and by an inspection of the work, to know and praise the Author; but we cannot surmise for what purpose He created each particular thing." *(Principes,* I, 28). We see that the organs of the viper, as well as its actions, are ordained for its preservation and propagation (intrinsic finality); but it is more difficult to say what purpose vipers serve (extrinsic finality). We do not know; this ignorance may prove the limitations of our mind, but it does not prove that there is to final cause. The ignorance does not prevent us from affirming with certainty, that eyes are made *for* seeing and wings *for* flying, and that the swallow gathers the straw *for* making its nest; the word *"for"* is not meaningless, but points to something real, just as the word *by* expresses efficient causality.

But Descartes goes farther than this. He revives the Epicurean

99 De Natura Deorum, II, 14.
100 Lettre à Elizabeth, ed. Garnier, Bk. 3, p. 210.

doctrine, adopted by the Evolutionists of our day, that the efficient causes explain everything. "Even though we were to believe in the existence of the chaos of the poets," he says, "it could always be proved that, thanks to the laws of nature, this confusion must gradually resolve itself into the actual order of things. The laws of nature are such, indeed, that matter must *of necessity* take all the forms which it is capable of receiving."[101] Judging from this passage it would seem that Descartes, like Spinoza after him, was quite ready to admit with the Epicureans and the present-day Evolutionists, not that the bird has wings for the purpose of flying, but that it flies because it has wings: that the mother has milk not for the purpose of suckling her baby, but she suckles her baby because she has milk which she wishes to get rid of. Epicurus considered living things to be the result of all sorts of combinations, some of which necessarily turn out to be harmonious. The Evolutionists (Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel and others) believe that the finality apparent in living beings can be explained by vital concurrence and natural selection. Among living beings only those survive and propagate their species which happen to be adapted to the conditions of existence. We have already seen that William James maintained that Darwinism has overthrown the proof for the existence of God drawn from final causes. "The adaptations which we find in nature," he writes, "since they are nothing else but chance successes amidst innumerable failures, suggest to us the idea of a divinity far different from that demonstrated by finalism."[102] He thinks that "we ought to pay more attention than we have hitherto done, to the pluralistic or polytheistic thesis."[103]

This denial of intrinsic finality conflicts with the findings (a) of common sense, (b) of science, (c) of philosophical reason.

101 Principes, III, 37.
102 Religious Experience, p. 438.
103 Ibid., p. 436.

a) In the coordination of the parts of an organism, or of some particular organ such as the eye or the ear; in the coordination of the actions of an animal when it instinctively builds a nest, a hive, etc., common sense or spontaneous reason, which has for its object the *raison d'être of things,* cannot avoid seeing precisely a *raison d'être* which fundamentally differentiates these organisms and their activity from any aggregation of things in which the union between the parts is purely accidental. No objection will ever destroy this certainty, which arises spontaneously in, and belongs to the very essence of, our intellect. Whenever reason comes in contact with the rational, it cannot help recognizing it, and whenever our intellect discovers an intelligible element in things, it knows very well that it did not put them there. If the Evolutionist wishes to assimilate an organism to an inanimate aggregation, common sense will say with Ruskin: "The philosopher tells us that there is as much heat, or motion, or calorific energy, in a tea-kettle as in a Gier-eagle. Very good; that is so; and it is very interesting. It requires just as much heat as will boil the kettle, to take the Gier-eagle up to its nest. But we painters, acknowledging the equality and similarity of the kettle and the bird in all scientific respects, attach, for our part, our principal interest to the difference in their forms. For us, the primarily cognisable facts in the two things are, that the kettle has a spout, and the eagle a beak; the one a lid on its back, the other a pair of wings; not to speak of the distinction of volition, which the philosophers may properly call merely a form or mode of force. The kettle chooses to sit still on the hob; the eagle to recline on the air. It is the fact of the choice, not the equal degree of temperature in the fulfilment of it, which appears to us the more interesting circumstance."[104]

b) The negation of intrinsic finality is equally opposed to science. John Stuart Mill, as we have already seen, recognizes

104 Ethics of the Dust, Leet. X, "The Crystal Rest."

that, according to the laws of induction and the actual state of science, the most probable cause of tire organic structure of the eye or of the ear, is not the "survival of the fittest," but a designing intelligence. He considers the proof for the existence of God based on finality to be an inductive argument, which in its manner of development follows closely the method of concordances. It is a "poor argument in many cases, though at times, too, it has considerable force of conviction; especially is such the case with those delicate and complicated adjustments of the plant and animal life."[105] In fact, from the mere standpoint of experimental science, the odds are overwhelmingly in favor of saying that a structure so complicated and so harmonious as the eye or the ear, could never be such without an intelligent designer, any more than the setting up of the type in the printing of the *Iliad* could ever be arranged again in the same way without an intelligent designer. In an organism such as the human body, the various parts are so interconnected that they are, from different points of view, causes one of the other, and concur in bringing about one complete effect. In an organic structure such as the eye, the act of seeing presupposes the simultaneous presence of thirteen conditions, and each of these conditions presupposes many others. Hartmann[108] has shown that, according to the law of probabilities, without any designing cause, there are 9,999,985 chances against 15 for the possibility of these thirteen conditions meeting so as to make seeing possible.[107] Kant recognized the impossibility of explaining the appearance of a blade of grass by natural laws in which there is no design, but thought that an intellect which could penetrate to the very heart of nature, might perhaps explain the phenomenon without reference to design. There is nothing to this theory, as we shall

105 Essays on Religion, p. 162.

108 Philosophie des Unbeivussten, Introd., ch. ii.

107 Cfr. Folghcra, *Hasard et Providence,* p. 25; also the *Revue Thomiste,* 1895, p. 64.

see. The negation of intrinsic finality is just as much opposed to philosophic reason as it is opposed to common sense and experimental science.

c) Philosophic reason proves the insufficiency of the two explanations by which it is claimed that intrinsic finality can be discarded, and rigorously defends the principle of finality. Even if we grant that Mechanistic Evolutionism explains the survival of the fittest, it cannot explain why there should be adaptations, except by ascribing them to *chance* or *necessity*—neither of which offers a sufficient explanation.

Chance is merely the absence of an explanation for those things, of a *raison d'être,* of intelligibility in things. Consequently, we shall see that to try to explain *everything* by chance is absurd.

Marvelous things do sometimes happen by chance; thus an archer may by sheer luck hit the target; but experience shows that such cases are exceptional. Aristotle[108] has proved convincingly that reason can see in chance only something which is accidental. It is the accidental cause of an effect produced without any intention,[108] either natural or conscious, such that it could be said to have been directly intended. The chance effect is an *accidental* effect which happens so as to make it seem that the action which brought it about was meant for that purpose. One digs a grave, which is the end intended, and accidentally finds a treasure. But precisely because it is *accidental,* chance cannot be considered the cause, in the *natural* order, of each agent which produces its own effect. We cannot claim that all the effects produced in nature are accidental; *for the accidental necessarily presupposes what is essential.* One finds a treasure

108 Physics, Bk. II, ch. viii; Commentary of St. Thomas, Leet. 7-13.

108 Hence in defining chance, Aristotle restricts himself to the order of secondary causes, and he is quite right in this; for with regard to the Supreme Intelligence there is no such thing as chance. Effects by their very nature depend upon their proximate, and not upon their ultimate, cause, as St. Thomas points out in his Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* Book VI, Leet. 3.

in digging a grave, but it is intentionally that one digs the grave, and previous to this, the treasure was intentionally buried in the ground. Chance is but the coming together of two actions which in themselves are not fortuitous, but intentional. Aristotle says that it is accidental for a doctor to be a musician; but this accidental union presupposes two terms, which in themselves are not accidentally constituted as such. It is not an accident that a doctor is a physician, and able to take care of the sick, any more than it is accidental for a musician to be proficient in music. To seek to reduce the whole natural order to chance would mean, therefore, to *reduce the essential to the accidental,* and, consequently, to destroy *every nature* and *every being;* for every being has a nature which is peculiarly its own (principle of identity). All that we should have left in such a case would be *fortuitous encounters, but not things capable of making such encounters,* which is absurd. Two wisps of straw blown by the wind accidentally come together; but the motion of each is not accidental, for it proceeds according to determined laws of nature. Agents which encounter each other accidentally, have each his own action, and it is this action which, independently of their encounter, demands an explanation. To say, as Epicurus did, and as so many Materialists or modern Positivists have repeated after him, that chance is the cause of the natural order, is not only no explanation of anything, but an absurd hypothesis, for it is making in principle the accidental to be *the basis of the natural or the essential. "Ens per accidens non potest esse causa entis per se, sed e contra essentialiter dependet ab ente per se,"* that is to say, accidental being cannot be the cause of substantial being, but, on the contrary, essentially depends upon substantial being.110

But though the accidental, and particularly chance, cannot be the principle of all things, it has its place in the world. How,

110 Sec Aristotle, *Metaph.,* Bk. VI, *De Ente per Accidens.*

then, shall we distinguish fortuitous events from natural effects, which cannot be explained by chance? We recognize the latter by their constancy and by their perfection, which is revealed to us in their harmony, or, in other words, by the fact that there is unity in diversity, and the more pronounced this unity is, the more it excludes chance, which is nothing else but the accidental encounter of two causes or series of causes.

a) What happens *always,* or *nearly always,* cannot possibly be the result of chance. This constancy would be without a sufficient reason, if it were not founded on the very nature of things, which is the ultimate source of their identity.

β) It is impossible for a *great number of causes* to combine by chance, to produce an effect *essentially one and perfect in its bind,* as is the case, for instance, with the act of seeing, in which the various parts of the eye concur. If this act were the effect of chance, something essentially one would be the result of an accidental combination *{ens per se ab ente per accidens produceretur),* the perfect would be produced by the imperfect, order would result from the absence of order, and the greater would proceed from the less. Such being the case, the unity and perfection of the effect would be without a *raison d'être,* which is absurd.

γ) It cannot possibly be ascribed to chance that *manifold and perfectly connected elements come from a germ of which unity is one of the essential notes,* as, for instance, in the case of the oak, the various parts of which come from the acorn. Evidently chance is out of the question here, from the very simplicity of the origin, which cannot be attributed to an accidental combination of elements.

δ) *A fortiori* it cannot be by chance that an effect which is *essentially one and perfect* comes from a *principle that is essentially one,* as, for instance, the act of understanding comes from the intellect. Chance, being an accidental encounter of

things, is evidently excluded by reason of the simplicity of the beginning and of the end of this process.[111]

For the full development of these ideas we must emphasize the *harmony* prevailing in the organisms of plants and animals, or, in other words, the unity in the diversity of causes which combine and are necessary for life. We must also stress the *permanence,* not only in time, but also in space, of the thousands of species in the plant and animal kingdoms.

We must also insist on the instinct in animals, and note that the three characteristics just mentioned are to be found in their operations, (a) The plurality of the elements which enter into the composition of their works; (Z>) the harmony of the effect produced, and (c) its constancy. "We see them," says St. Thomas, "always or nearly always acting in the same manner so as to obtain the best result." [112] The spider works very much like a weaver, the bee seems to be a perfect mathematician. (This characteristic of constancy or permanence of type, which surely is not the result of chance, shows us also, as Aristotle remarks in the second book of his *Physics* [ch. VIII], that the animal does not act intelligendy; for it cannot, like the architect, pass judgment on the appearance of its work when completed, nor can it make any alterations in the same. If one upsets what an animal is constructing, it often, urged on by instinct, continues to work in the same way to no purpose).[113]

Chance, therefore, leaves everything to be explained. To wish to explain all things by it, to say that it is the cause of order in the universe, is tantamount to saying that there are effects with-

111 On this subject cfr. St. Thomas on the 2nd Book of the *Physics,* Leet. 12; also *De Veritate,* q. 5, a. 2; *C. Gentes,* Bk. I, ch. xiii.

112 Summa Theologica, la, q. 2, a. 3.

113 Concerning these facts, see Folghcra, *Hasard et Providence,* Paris, 1900, pp. 27 ff.; Guibert, *Les Croyances Religieuses et les Sciences de la Nature,* Paris, 1908, pp. 117-118; Louis Murat, *L'Idée de Dieu dans les Sciences Contemporaines.* Paris, 1909.

out causes, that the greater comes from the less, the higher from the lower; that the accidental is prior to the essential, that the essential is but a name—a denial of the principle of identity—that, in consequence, the real is not intelligible. Does this mean that we deny there is such a thing as chance? Not at all. Things do sometimes happen by chance, as far as secondary causes are concerned. But to an intelligence knowing and disposing of the *ensemble* of causes and forces, and governing their tendencies, all the seemingly fortuitous events in life would be predetermined and foreseen.[114] But that does not mean that all these fortuitous encounters were intended as an *end;* they could only be the result of what is desired for its own sake, and they could not be desired for their own sake except *ex consequenti.* We merely affirm that to explain by chance the constant harmony of effects produced in nature, is no explanation at all, and, moreover, lands one in absurdity.

Is *necessity* a sufficient explanation, as Democritus and many modern Mechanists would have it? In other words, is it enough to appeal *merely to the efficient cause* and to the determining element it carries within itself?

We have yet to explain why this efficient cause acts, instead of remaining inert. If there is no perfection in its action, a good corresponding to the natural inclination of the agent, then this action was taken without a *raison d'être.* It will not do to say that this efficient cause acts because it is moved to action by another, and this in turn by still another, and so on, *ad infinitum.* This would be but to postpone, not to answer, the question. We want to know *why* it is that every efficient cause acts instead of not acting.

Moreover, the *determination* which bears within it the efficient

114 "All things which happen in this world, as far as the first divine cause is concerned, are found to be pre-arranged and not to exist by accident; although, if we compare them with other causes, they may be found to be accidental." (St. Thomas, *In Metaph.,* Bk. VI, Leet. 3).

cause, must also be explained. St. Thomas 115 proposes to himself this objection: *"Illud quod est de se determinatum ad unum non indiget aliquo regente; quia ad hoc regimen alicui adhibetur ne in contrarium dilabatur. Res autem per propriam naturam sunt determinatae ad unum, i. e.,* that which is determined to one line of action, does not need any directive agency; because a directive agency is given to anything in order to keep it from acting contrariwise. But things are determined by their very nature to one line of action." According to the Mechanists, things are constituted as follows: fire, by reason of its nature, must burn; the bird must fly; it *must* fly, but it has not wings *for* flying. In like manner, says Spinoza, the triangle, by its very nature, must have its three angles equal to two right angles; but no one will say that it possesses its peculiar nature *for* the purpose of having its three angles equal to two right angles.

St. Thomas answers as follows: *"Ista determinatio, qua res naturalis determinatur ad unum, non est ei ex seipsa, sed ex alio; et ideo ipsa determinatio ad effectum convenientem providentiam demonstrat, ut dictum est, i. e.,* this determination, by which a thing in nature is determined to one line of action, belongs to it, not as coming from itself, but as coming from another; and, therefore, as has been said, this very determination for a suitable effect demonstrates that there is a providence." In other words, if you seek to explain the flight of a bird by the necessary conformation of its wings, the necessity of this conformation has still to be explained, and if it has not its own *raison d'etre* within itself, then we must seek this *raison d'etre* in something higher. In truth, we can explain such and such a property of a triangle by showing that it is derived from the nature of the triangle, and this fully explains it. The nature of the triangle, as geometry considers it, abstracting from all sensi-

115 *De Veritate,* q. 5, a. 2, ad 511m.

ble matter and from all efficient causality, is something which has its own sufficient reason for what it is within itself; the triangle is of itself a triangle. The case is different with a triangular object; here we may ask why it is triangular. We have a composition (a lack of identity), which demands a cause. Likewise, we may ask ourselves: Why are the bird's wings so conformed? St. Thomas says that "this determination, by which a thing in nature is determined to one line of action, belongs to it, not as coming from itself, but as coming from another." And if in answer to this question, the Mechanists appeal to the presence of a prior efficient cause, and, in the final analysis, to a general law of physics, such as the law of the conservation of energy, they merely evade the question. We still ask, why the prior efficient cause acts, and has such and such a determination and direction, why the force operates in a certain determined manner, and why there is conservation of the same.

Descartes and Spinoza sought to reduce physics to mathematics, which latter science excludes the consideration of perceptible matter, of efficient and of final causes, and is concerned only with the formal cause. They emphatically declared that the laws of physics are absolute and necessary *a priori,* like the laws of mathematics, and hence denied the possibility of miracles. Spinoza held that God can no more prevent fire from burning, than He can prevent a triangle from having three angles equal to two right angles.

We fully understand that mathematics, since it considers merely quantity, should exclude the efficient cause, and consequently also the final cause, which corresponds to the efficient cause. But what right has anyone to impose mathematical abstraction upon such sciences as cosmology and metaphysics, which have for their object not only quantity, but also *being, becoming,* and action?

Leibniz, recurring to Aristotle, replied to Descartes and

Spinoza by insisting that the order or laws of nature are contingent. He pointed out that the laws of motion arid of the conservation of energy are not necessary, but could have been formulated differently. They were chosen as the most suitable, but others suggested themselves, and a choice had to be made. Is it of absolute necessity that the apparent motion of the sun should take place in a certain way, and not in reverse order? Or that there should be on earth such a vast number of animal and plant species? 116 Boutroux has defended this thesis at length in his book on the Contingency of the Laws of Nature. "The most elementary and the most general laws, both physical and chemical, express relations between things so heterogeneous that it is impossible to say whether the consequent is proportionate to the antecedent and is truly the result of this latter, as the effect is the result of a cause. . . . For us they are merely so many contacts given by experience, and, like it, contingent."117 The law of the conservation of energy is not a necessary truth, a supreme law from which nature cannot escape. Neither is there inherent in the physico-chemical forces any intrinsic necessity compelling them to produce this particular combination which results in life, sensation, and intelligence.118

Therefore, necessity is not sufficient to explain, anteriorly to the "survival of the fittest," the origin of adaptations. The necessity of physical laws is merely *hypothetical; i.e.,* it presupposes something. And precisely what does it presuppose? Finality. The expression, *"hypothetical necessity"* is the English equivalent of *το Ιξ νποθϊσίω·; ἀναγκαίον* of Aristotle.118 If the end must exist, then such and such means are necessary. Thus, if a man

116 Cfr. the quotations from Leibniz given by Paul Janet in *Les Causes Finales,* pp. 642-650.

117 Boutroux, *La Contingence des Lois de la Nature,* 3rd ed., p. 74.

118 On this subject see Gardeil's article in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1896, pp. 800, 804, 818.

119 Phys., Π, ch. ix.

has vision, the thirteen conditions for seeing are necessary. This necessity is not absolute, but always presupposes the means viewed in relation to the end. Then, too, there might be exceptions, as, for instance, monsters. Whereas in metaphysics and in mathematics the laws are absolute and admit of no exception, in physics they apply to the generality of cases (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, *ut in pluribus),* and the exceptions are all the more numerous, the more complicated the law is.

Finally, philosophic reasoning establishes the fact that, *even if necessity existed throughout nature, and admitted of no exception, it mould still presuppose finality.* Let us take, for instance, a principle of operation as simple as possible, such as the force of attraction, or, better still, the intellectual faculty. There is nothing in it, no *complexity of organization* that needs to be explained, but there *is* something *relative,* which can be explained only by the law of finality. In fact, the principle that "every agent must act with an end in view," is derived directly from the principle of sufficient reason, just as is the principle of causality, and the principle of sufficient reason itself, as we have observed *(supra,* n. 24), referred back to the principle of identity, by a process of *reductio ad impossibile.* We have pointed out previously (n. 27), how the principle of finality is self-evident and reducible to the principle of sufficient reason. We must stress the importance of this truth.

Jouffroy, in his *Cours de Droit Naturel,* where he inquires into the truths upon which the moral order is based, correctly says that "the first of these truths is the principle that every being has an end or a purpose. Like the principle of causality, it has all the evidence, universality, and necessity which we find in the latter principle, and we can see no exception to either." Paul Janet, in his in other respects so remarkable book on Final Causes, fails to see that the principle of finality is necessary and self-evident, because he never discovered its exact formula, but stopped at

the too general formula, "Everything has an end." He did not think it possible to affirm *a priori,* and before proving the existence of God, that the various Alpine slopes, for instance, have their end as well as their efficient cause. The true formula of the principle of finality is that given by Aristotle, and constantly quoted by St. Thomas: *"Every agent necessarily acts for an end!"*120 The necessity of a final cause is declared to be an immediate necessity, not for *every thing,* but for *every agent.* The encounter of two agents, from which the mountain slopes result, may be fortuitous, but each of them must of necessity act for an end. In fact, the final cause is the *raison d'être* of the efficient cause. This is what Paul Janet failed to see. He also failed to realize that the principle of finality is a necessary and immediately evident principle. Ravaisson, on the other hand, was not mistaken. "We conceive it as necessary," he said, "that the cause, together with the reason for beginning, also includes the end to which a thing tends." 121 Lachelier bases the induction just as much on the final as on the efficient cause.122 Hartmann clearly explains this necessity of a final cause, by taking for an example the simplest of all cases, that of the attraction between atoms. "The attractive force of a corporeal atom," he says, *"tends* to approach every other atom; the result of this tendency is the production or realization of this *rapprochement.* Therefore, we must distinguish in force between the *tendency itself,* considered as a pure and simple act, and the *end* in view, *i. e.,* the content or object of the tendency. . . . If the motion thus produced were not contained in the tendency, there is no reason why this latter should produce attraction rather than something else—repulsion, for instance, or why it should obey a certain law rather than some other, in the change which it undergoes during tire

120 "Omne agens necesse est agere propter finem." (Phys., Bk. II, ch. iii; *C. Gentes,* Bk. Ill, ch. ii; S. *Th.,* la Ilae, q.i, a.2; la, q.44, a.4).

121 Rapport sur la Philosophie en Prance, 2nd cd., § 36.

122 See his *Le Rondement de l'induction.*

distance traversed. . . . The tendency would not be towards any end; it would have no object, and consequently would produce no result." 123 This reads almost like a translation of the second chapter of Book III of the *Summa contra Gentes,* in which St. Thomas says: "If the agent did not tend towards some particular effect, all effects would be indifferent. But that which is indifferent toward many things, no more produces one of these than any other. Therefore, from whatever is indifferent to one thing or the other, no effect follows, except by something which is determined to produce one specific effect, because otherwise it would be impossible for it to act. Hence every agent tends to some determinate effect, which is said to be its end." 124

The principle that "every agency acts for an end," is self-evident, with an evidence which is not of sense perception, but of the intellect, provided that the *exact meaning* is given to the words: *action* and *end,* as we pointed out *supra,* n. 27. In fact, the end is a determined perfection which it is fitting for the agent to have as a good of its own and for the sake of which the agent acts. Now, every agent, according to the law governing its nature, produces a determined effect, which belongs to it as its perfection, and it cannot produce this effect, unless it *tends* towards this effect in preference to any other, and unless it is *ordained* towards the same.

Thus without reasoning we discover that the eye is made for seeing, the ear for hearing, the wings for flying, etc. Finality, which is a necessary *raison d'etre* of action, applies equally to the intelligence, because this latter is a faculty of *being.*

The self-evident principle of finality can be defended by showing that it refers back to the principle of sufficient reason, so that to deny the former would lead to a denial of the latter.

128 La Philosophie de l'inconscient, Vol. II, p. 144.

124 C. Gent., III, ii; cfr. Gardeil, *"L'Evolutionnisme et les Principes de St. Thomas,"* in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1895, p. 581, and 1896, p. 399.

St. Thomas briefly points this out when he says that "Every agent acts for an end: otherwise one thing rather than another would not follow from the action of the agent." 125 If every agent produces, not any sort of effect indifferently, but a determinate and suitable effect, and this *without tending* towards this effect, without being *ordained* towards this effect rather than towards another; if the acorn produces the oak and not the ash, without its having a definite tendency for the one rather than for the other; if the eye sees instead of hearing, without being meant for seeing rather than hearing—it follows that the non-accidental determination and appropriateness of the effect are without a *raison d'etre,* that determination comes from indetermination, that order arises from the lack of order, that the perfect originates from the imperfect, the greater from the less—all of which statements are absurd. The determination and the perfection of the effect could not have been realized in it, unless they were in a certain manner contained in the efficient cause. Now, for the effect not to be contained in the cause *actually,* but only *virtually,* this could not be, unless the efficient cause *tended* towards this effect rather than another, unless it were *directed* towards this effect.

Without this tendency and this order, not only are the determination and the appropriateness of the effect without a *raison d'etre,* but even the determination and the appropriateness of the action cannot be explained. Finally, the principle itself of action or potency (active or passive) cannot be conceived except as *preordained* to the act. *Potentia dicitur essentialiter ad actum* (potency essentially refers to act) is one of the formulas pertaining to the principle of finality, which refers primarily to action and secondarily to potency, the principle of action.126

120 Summa Theol., Ia, q. 44, a. 4.

128 In God there is no distinction between active power and action; but the action which extends to created things is directed towards an end, which is not

Potency *does not end* merely in the act; this latter is not simply a result of it, for in that case the act would not be predetermined and would have no *raison d'etre.* And how could this sufficient reason be in the potency, since the act is more perfect than the potency, having more of *being* in itself? The act is the answer to the *why* of potency. It is the *το ου ἕνεκα,* the *id cujus gratia,* the purpose of the potency, just as the imperfect is *for* the perfect, and the relative *for* the absolute. In fact, it is only the absolute which has its *raison d'etre* within itself.

So also the act in its actual operation is *for* the perfection which is acquired or manifested by it. The immanent actions of knowing and of loving are *ordained* for the acquisition of truth and goodness. The transitive action of any agent is ordained either for the attainment of some good, or else for the communication of a good possessed by the agent, so that other beings may share in it.

Potency is for the act, and action is either for the attainment or for the communication of some perfection. The word *for* is not a meaningless term. Thus philosophical reason reunites with the *sensus communis* and justifies it.

Therefore, if there is action in the world, there is finality; for without it, this action would produce everything or nothing, but not a determined effect. For this reason we may say that the proof for the existence of God based on the finality prevailing in the world, may start not only from a consideration of the marvelous organisms or instincts of animals, but also from a consideration of any ordained multiplicity of design in things, even if it be only that which is found in every created being, whose essence is ordained for existence and whose operative power is designed for action.

The existence of the *internal finality* being thus affirmed and

the attainment of the Sovereign Good, which God possesses independently of others, but the manifestation of His goodness or His glory.

established by the *sensus communis,* by science and reason, there may be deduced from it the existence of *external finality,* as Paul Janet has demonstrated.127 In fact, we notice in die scale of beings that the. higher *mafe use* of the lower. Thus the mineral is utilized by the plant, which in its turn is utilized by the animal, which in turn is utilized by man. To say that the higher makes use of the lower is to say that the higher directs the lower to its own proper (intrinsic) end. Thus the animal for its own preservation utilizes the plant, which is its internal end; but this preservation is made possible only by the use of appropriate matter. Whence it follows that, corresponding to this intrinsic end, there is an extrinsic end, which is the intrinsic end of the higher *being*. St. Thomas says: "The end of the agent and of the patient, considered as such, is identical, but in a different way, respectively." 128 The patient, as such, not as a *being,* has the same end as the agent. Food is directed to nutrition, just as is the nutritive power. If the extrinsic finality of things frequently escapes our notice, and if inexperienced apologists have made too free a use of this argument, this is no reason why we should deny it. The same must be said of those cases in which there seems to be sufficient evidence of finality. Thus by means of the functioning of the chlorophyll substance in plants they purify the air by absorbing the carbonic acid in it which comes from the breathing of animals. During the hours of daylight, by means of this absorption, the plant decomposes this carbonic acid, restoring the oxygen necessary to the animal, and absorbing the carbon, with which it composes the hydrates of combustible carbon, using it to form other compounds of combustible hydrocarbons, which serve as food for the animal. But this extrinsic finality need not always be realized. It is demanded for the higher forms of life, but not for the lower. During the time when there was as yet

127 Les Causes Finales, p. 497.
128 Summa Theol., la, q. 44, a. 4.

no animal life on earth, plant life, if it existed, did not attain its extrinsic end.

It is thus that we prove the existence of finality in the world. This relation of means to an end seems even more evident in the organism or the instinctive activity of the animal, but it is also found in every agent and constitutes the connecting link between the various beings in the universe, which react mutually upon one another. The subordination of agents corresponds to the subordination of ends.[129]

We can now understand why Aristotle wrote: "Everything in the universe is subject to a certain order, though this order is not the same for all beings, for fishes, birds, plants. Things are not so arranged as if each were unrelated to the other. Far from this being the case, they are all interrelated and all concur with a perfect regularity in producing a unique result. Hence the universe resembles a well arranged house." [130]

In view of what we have said, but little of consequence remains in the objections raised by the Abbé Le Roy against the minor of the proof for the existence of God from final causes.[131] This proof, according to the Abbé Le Roy, is based on *extrinsic* finality and is contradicted by science and critical philosophy, which admit only intrinsic finality. The principle of analogy which it establishes between our activity and that of nature, is contested by psychology. Finally, the argument regards order as something superadded, as it were by way of an afterthought, to already existing elements. We have seen that our minor is directly concerned with *intrinsic* finality. The affirmation of this intrinsic finality is not an anthropomorphic view, a sort of projection beyond ourselves of what we experience within the domain of our own activities, in which we find finality to be

129 See St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* la Ilae, q. 109, a. 6.
180 Met., Bk. XII, c. x.
181 Sec *Revue de Mit. et de Mor.,* March, 1907.

an indisputable fact. But it is quite certain that Empiricism and Subjectivistic Rationalism cannot conceive finality in any other way. In systems such as these, finality is almost inevitably a more or less gratuitous attribution to corporeal things of what we experience within ourselves. In reality, the principle of finality is not an experimental truth drawn from internal experience, but a necessary law of *being,* derived from the principle of sufficient reason. We do not content ourselves with asserting, as Stuart Mill does, that there is an *analogy* between nature and the works of human art, but we go farther and demonstrate *a priori* that every agent acts for an end. Finally, order is by no means to be considered as something superadded *like an afterthought* to already existing elements, for these elements could not exist or act without being preordained or predetermined. The end, far from being something superadded, is the first in intention of all causes *{prima in intentione),* even though it be the last in point of realization *{ultima in executione).* Before the acorn produces an oak, it is preordained for this purpose, it is made *for* the purpose of producing the oak.

2. Does this *relation* of means to end, this *orderly arrangement* of things, demand an intelligent cause? The major of our proof says that it does: "Beings which lack intelligence cannot tend towards an end, unless they are directed to it by an intelligent cause," or, more simply, "a means cannot be *directed* to an end except by an intelligent agent."

This major is often proved by saying that the end which determines the tendency and the means, is none other than the effect to be realized at some future time. But a future effect is a mere possibility, which, in order to determine its own causes, must be real and present in some way, and such a presence is possible only in a being cognizant of itself.

This argument proves that there must be a being cognizant of itself, but not that this being must be intelligent. "The ani-

mais," says St. Thomas, "have knowledge of *that which constitutes the end,* (for instance, they go in search of prey), and they make use of the means which will enable them to attain that end; but they do not know *the nature of an end as such; they t^now the thing which constitutes the end, but they do not know it as an end!'*[132] The *id cujus gratia aliquid fit, that for the sake of which something is done,* they do not know. They cannot perceive the relation of the means to the end; likewise, they are incapable of appropriating to themselves the means of attaining the end. Only an intelligent being can perceive this *relation,* because a being endowed with intelligence, instead of merely associating or juxtaposing images, perceives the reasons why things are, and the means is related to the end as such precisely because it has its *raison d'être* in the end. Evidently this *raison d'être* can be perceived only by that faculty which has for its formal object *being* itself, and not color, or sound, or any of the facts of internal experience. Moreover, the perception of this *raison d'être* presupposes that the means and the end have been reduced to the unity of a single representation, and it is only the intellectual concept that can effect such a unity. Just as we rise from the multiple to one in the proof based upon the various grades of *being,* so in this proof we conclude from the ordained multiplicity of things to an ordaining unity. "It belongs to reason to direct, because reason has the faculty of ordaining things to their end."[133] Therefore, the order prevailing in the world calls for an intelligent designer.

Kant objects that, granted the existence of finality, we cannot affirm that the proper reason of the order in the world is because it is the result of an intelligent designer. He says that it is merely an analogy; *we* say that it is the result of intelligent design, because we do not know any other cause.

182 Summa Tbeol., Ia Hac, q. I, a. 2.
183 Ibid., q. 90, a. I.

We say that this order is the result of intelligent design, not only because chance, blind necessity, instinct, or blind freedom explain nothing, but also because *order* presupposes that the means find their *raison d'être* in the end, and because it is of the very essence of intelligence to perceive the *raison d'être,* which is its formal object. Moreover, intelligence is a vital and transcendental relation to *being,* and is, therefore, like *being,* analogous, and no more implies imperfection in its concept than *being* itself; it is an absolute perfection.

It is further objected that there could be several intelligent designers. In answer to this we would say that we observe all the forces of nature harmoniously combining for one common end, which presupposes a common purpose. Against those who admit several first principles, Aristotle remarks: "The world refuses to be governed badly. 'The rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be.' " [134] Moreover, these many intelligences would all have some *relation* to the intelligible and to *being,* but they would not be *the being.* In each of them there would be a multiplicity of design, because of its capacity for knowing and its object. We must continue our search until we arrive at a supreme intelligence, which is identified with *being,* and by which all die minor intelligences are definitely directed to *being.*

Kant insists that this proof can at most demonstrate the existence of a mighty and vast, but not of an infinite intelligence. It leads us to conceive God as the architect of the world, but not as its creator.

Cajetan had already answered this objection when he pointed out[135] that it is sufficient if this proof leads us to an intelligence, without going into details, since the four preceding proofs have demonstrated the existence of a prime mover, of a first cause, of a necessary being, and of a first being that is

134 Met., Bk. XII, *circa finem.* The quotation is from Homer's *Iliad,* Bk. ii, v. 204.
135 Comment, in S. TA., la, q. 2, a. 3.

absolutely simple and of sovereign perfection. But if we look more closely into this matter, we perceive that the intelligence claimed by this fifth proof must be *pure act.* If it were not so, we should have to say that its essence differed from its existence, that its intelligence was not its intellection, and that in it intellection and the intelligible were not identical.[138] Now, essence cannot be *directed* to existence, nor intelligence to the intelligible object, except by a higher intelligence which is identical with its very being, always in the act of knowing itself.

Schopenhauer admits the presence of finality in the world, but ascribes it to no other cause than an unconscious will, as an example of which he cites instinct. Bergson upholds more or less the same doctrine. It has been said in reply that this teaching substitutes zoomorphism for anthropomorphism, which brings us no farther. But to affirm that there is an intelligence is not an anthropomofphism, since intelligence, considered as such, and not merely insofar as it is human, is an absolute perfection with no trace of imperfection. If it is realized in its *pure state* in any being, it is not in man, but in God.

Moreover, in seeking to replace intelligence by instinct, we again encounter finality, which calls for an explanation. Finally, the cause which has produced man must be at least of equal dignity with him. To rest satisfied with an instinctive finality is to return to the hylozoism of the ancients and to endow matter with sympathies and antipathies which, far from constituting a supreme principle by which all things can be explained, need to be explained themselves. The simplest of material elements, the atom and the crystal, far from being the principle of things, cannot be explained except by some idea of a type or end, which only an intelligence could conceive and endow them with.

Hartmann recognizes that the unconscious will of Schopenhauer cannot harbor within itself any principle of determina-

136 Summa Theol., Ia> q. 54, a. 1-3.

tion, and acknowledges the existence of an intelligence, but describes it as unconscious. We ask: how could an unconscious intelligence know the end and meaning of finality, and how could it adapt means to that end?

Lachelier 187 comes with an objection taken from Hegel. Let us suppose, he says, that order originates in God; now order, in a certain sense, must be prior to God's intellectual operation. Therefore, all regularly constituted order does not presuppose the operation of an intelligence. Hence, why not suppose, in accordance with the Absolute Idealism of Hegel, that nature is eternal and bears its own order within itself, that is to say, is the self-evolving idea? We should then have an unconscious finality of the logical order, which would ultimately reach the stage of consciousness in man.

It is easy to answer this objection. The order which demands a cause, is that which is in *process of formation,* that which *is becoming,* and not that which *is.* The order which demands a cause is that which implies an *actual multiplicity* of parts, and not that implied in the *virtual multiplicity* inherent in absolute unity. *Becoming* presupposes *being,* the multiple presupposes one, the composite presupposes the simple. All these points have been demonstrated in the preceding proofs. The order which is in God, and which has a logical priority over the divine thought, is that which is virtually implied in the very essence of God, whose perfection is infinite in its possibility of participation and whose eminent simplicity is fecund with an infinity of virtual multiplicity.138 How does this supreme indivisible concentrate within itself this multiplicity? It begins to suggest itself to those who grasp a whole science in its fundamental principles, or who succeed, as Mozart did, in hearing a melody not successively, but all at once in the very law which governed its composition. A

187 *Fondement de l'induction,* p. 63.
188 C£r. *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 14, a. 5, 6, 8, 11, 12; q. 15, a. 1 and 2.

return to the Idealistic Evolutionism of Hegel, on the contrary, is to posit a *becoming* which is its own reason for being what it is, and, therefore, a denial of the objective validity of the principle of identity or non-contradiction; it makes the conscious originate from the non-conscious, or, what amounts to the same thing, it makes the greater come from the less, and being evolve from nothingness.

Therefore, the proof based on final causes has lost none of its validity. Like the preceding proofs, its certainty is not merely physical, but metaphysical. It is not founded solely on the experimental or inductive method, as John Stuart Mill maintains. Its minor is based upon the necessary and self-evident principle of finality, while its major is derived from the immediate and analytic relation of the intelligence either to being or to the *raison d'etre* of things.

41) *These five typical proofs establish five attributes, which can be predicated only of the self-subsisting being, who subsists above all things.*

We may now summarize the results achieved by the five typical proofs of God's existence. They establish in Him five attributes: that of First Mover, that of First Efficient Cause, that of First Necessary Being, that of First and Greatest Being *(primum verum, primum intelligens, primum bonum),* and, finally, that of First Intelligent Ruler.139 We have already shown that each of these attributes can be predicated only of that Being whose essence is identical with its existence, and which for this reason is self-subsistent being, *ipsum esse subsistens.1™*

The proof for the existence of God is completed by a combination of these five ways.

189 Cajetan, *Comment, in S. Theol.,* la, q. 2, a. 3.
140 Summa Theol., la, q.3, a. 1.

The first mover must be its own activity, and being *pure act* in the operative order, it must be the same in the entitative order, for the mode of operation follows the mode of *being.* Therefore, its essence is not merely capable of existing, it is Being itself.

The first cause, to be uncaused, must contain within itself the reason for its own existence. Now, it cannot cause itself, for it would have to be in existence before it could cause itself. Therefore, it has not received existence, but is existence itself.

The necessary being implies existence as an essential predicate, that is to say, it must not only *have* existence, but *be* its very existence.

The supreme being is absolutely simple and perfect, and hence could not participate in existence, but must be self-existent.

The first intelligence, which directs all things, cannot be directed to *being* as to some object distinct from itself. It must be absolutely the Being always actually known to itself.

The proofs of God's existence lead up to this as their terminus, the terminus of ascending metaphysics, which rises from sensible things up to God *(via inventionis},* and is the starting-point in the metaphysics of the descending order, which judges everything by the ultimate reasons of things *(via judicii).*[141]

Hence we see that in this order of the ultimate reasons of things the fundamental verity is that *"in God alone essence and existence are identical."* [142] This is the supreme principle of the essential distinction between God and the world. That essential distinction is at once evident to us, because God is immutable, whereas the world is subject to change (ist, 2nd, and 3rd ways); because God is absolutely simple, whereas the world is composite (4th and 5th ways). It finds its definitive formula in the phrase that God is "He who is," whereas all things outside of

141 St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* la, q. 79, a. 9.

142 Cfr. Del Prado, *De Veritate Fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae,* Fribourg, Switzerland, 1911.

Him are by their very nature merely capable of existing, and composed of essence and existence.

The *sensus communis* sees all this implicidy, though it cannot reduce it to a formula. It does not demonstrate it, but, because of its *instinct for being,* it feels it. It has a sort of vague intuition that the principle of identity is the supreme law of objective reality, as well as of thought, and that the supreme reality must be to being as A is to A, absolutely one and immutable, and consequently, transcendental, distinct from the universe, which is essentially manifold and changeable. We do not need to be deeply versed in Plato's *Sophist* or Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* to find out the meaning of those words which God spoke to Moses: "I am who am" (Ex. Ill, 14), or of St. Augustine's commentary: "In comparison with Him, the things that are mutable, are as if they were not." 143

Hence, we see the meaning and the bearing of the proof for God's existence based on the universal consent of mankind. It is a confirmation of the truth. "How are we to explain this universal belief in God, if not by the persuasive force of the arguments which we have set forth? ... If faith in the divine were the result of an unreasonable fear, or if it had been imposed upon nations by legislators for the purpose of investing their laws with a sacred authority, it would have disappeared from our midst along with the causes which gave it birth. On the contrary, this faith is everywhere maintained with a tenacity which nothing can conquer."144 Concerning this universal consensus of mankind we may say with de Quatrefages145 that "nowhere do we find atheism either among the inferior or the superior races; we come across it only in individuals or in schools of a more or less restricted nature." The recent discoveries in the history of re-

143 De Civitate Dei, l. VIII, c. xi.
144 Vacant, *Etudes sur le Concile du Vatican,* Vol. I, p. 323.
145 L'Espèce Humaine, ch. 35, no. 4.

ligions "show that all religions acknowledge a belief in a supreme being, a creator, an organizer and master of the world, and in one who is also a father to men."[146]

A final proof of God's existence may be deduced from supernatural effects such as miracles. Every supernatural effect which can be known in a natural way, but cannot be explained except by attributing it to divine intervention, furnishes us with a proof of God's existence. Such is the case with every extraordinary event of the sensible order, which surpasses all the forces of nature, such as the resurrection of a dead man, or the multiplication of loaves, as recorded in the Gospel. This proof is not within reach of the *sensus communis,* which sees vaguely (though with certainty), in a miraculous occurrence such as the resurrection of a dead man, that it bears an immediate relation to *being,* its formal object, and to the proper cause of *being* as *being, i. e.,* God. Because of this intuition, spontaneous reason refuses to be influenced by those philosophers who are opposed to the miraculous, and object that we do not know all the forces of nature. There can be no doubt about that, but when we see an effect so profound and universal that it cannot be produced except by the first and universal cause, we know that this effect is *being itselj.xil*

By intuition the intellect spontaneously perceives a miracle to be an exceptional production of *being,* like creation, or an *immediate* modification of *being* as such, of what there is substantial about it. Such is the case with the multiplication of loaves and resurrection from the dead. These events presuppose an agent with immediate power over *being,* substance, and matter and capable of exercising this power without the intervention of any accidental modifications.[148] The *substantial* reunion of the

146 Le Roy, *La Religion des Primitifs,* p. 464.

147 Summa Theol., la, q. 45, a. 5; q. 105, a. 6, 7, 8.

148 God alone possesses over the very being of things, over substance and matter, a power not only mediate (through the intervention of accidents), but also *im-*

soul with its body can only be the effect of a cause which is capable of *immediate* contact with the very substance of *being*. Hence, to see the *finger of God* in a miracle, it is not necessary for us to have faith; the innate sense of *being,* which is natural reason or the *sensus communis,* is sufficient for the purpose.

As Vacant points out,[148] "this demonstration of the existence of God finds its corroboration when it is based upon a group of facts in which the action of a supernatural providence is manifest." The vitality and wonderful spread of the Church, its eminent sanctity, and the fact that it is an inexhaustible source of all kinds of spiritual benefits, prove that from all eternity there was a being from whom all justice, goodness, and sanctity proceeded, and who must be Goodness, Justice, and Sanctity itself.

The existence of physical and moral evil, as we have already remarked (n. 34), cannot cause us to doubt the existence of God. Moral evil, which is far more grave than physical evil, so far from disproving the existence of God, presupposes His existence, because, in the final analysis, it is nothing else but an offence against God. If evil exists, no matter of what kind it may be, God has permitted it for the purpose of manifesting His power and His goodness, for, as St. Augustine says,[150] "He would not have permitted it, if He did not have power and goodness enough to draw good even out of evil."

mediate. Now, the substantial reunion of the soul with the body, without the intervention of any predisposing accidental elements, presupposes this immediate power. Therefore, God alone can make this a reality. Only the Author of life can restore life to one who is dead. Natural agents cannot produce a living substance, except by way of generation, which presupposes the presence of the indispensable and accidental predisposing elements. (See la, q. 45, a. 5; q. 105, a. 1; q. no, a. 2 and 4; Illa, q. 75, a. 4; Supplement to the *Summa,* q. 75, a. 3).

149 Etudes sur le Concile du Vatican, Vol. I, p. 174.

150 Enchiridion, ch. XI.

Such are the proofs for the existence of God. They engender a certainty which is neither moral nor physical, but metaphysical or absolute. It is *absolutely* certain that *God exists,* that *the greatest Being which can be conceived, has objective reality.* To deny this statement would be to deny the principle of causality, the principle of sufficient reason, and, finally, the principle of non-contradiction. The Hegelian system furnishes historic proof for this. Having set out with the avowed purpose of denying the true God, transcendental and distinct from the world, its author had to admit that contradiction is at the root of all things. The choice between God and absurdity is inexorable.

APPENDIX

The Thomistic Proofs for the Existence of God in their Relation to the Notion of Proper Cause

St. Thomas defines the notion of proper cause in his Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* Book V, ch. ii, lect. 3, and in the *Analytica Post.,* Book I, lect. 10, entitled "Quartus Modus Dicendi per se," *i. e.,* the fourth mode of *per se* predication. His teaching, which constitutes the basis of the proofs for the existence of God, is summed up in the following propositions.

1) *The proper cause* is that which can produce a certain effect by itself *(per se)* and immediately as such *(primo).* It is that cause upon which the effect *per se primo,* necessarily and immediately, depends, just as a property depends upon the essence from which it is derived, *e. g.,* the properties of a circle from the nature of the circle. The proper effect is like a property manifested *ad extra.*

2) *The proper cause,* inasmuch as it is a *necessary requisite,* differs from the accidental cause, just as there is opposition between these two propositions: a man generates a man; Socrates generates a man. It is purely accidental for the one who generates to be Socrates, and still more so for him to be a philosopher. Thus we say that the movements in the universe required a prime mover, but we should be guilty of precipitation if we at once concluded that this prime mover must be free.

3) *The proper cause,* inasmuch as it is an *immediate requisite,* differs from every other cause, no matter how strictly it is required. Thus, to carve a statue requires a sculptor. To say that it requires an artist would be to designate too general a cause. We must state precisely the kind of cause required. Similarly, it would not be definite enough to say that the movements in the universe require a primary being: what they immediately demand is a prime mover.

4) *The most particular causes are the proper cause of the most particular eÿects.* Thus, this animal is die proper cause of the genera-

tion of this living exemplar of the same species; but it does not explain the existence of animal life on earth, and it stands as much in need of being explained, as does its proper effect, of which it is said to be the univocal cause or one which belongs to the same species. We have here a causality of a very inferior order. St. Thomas writes: "It is clear that of two things in the same species, one cannot *per se* cause the form of the other as such, since it would then be the cause of its own form, which is essentially the same as the form of the other; but it can be the cause of this form inasmuch as it is in matter, in other words, it may be the cause that *this particular matter* receives *this particular form.*[1]

5) *The most universal effects* demand as their proper cause a cause higher than all others.[2] *This* body, which is in motion, may truly be the cause of *this* other motion, but if the motion itself, wherever we find it realized, whether in corporeal or incorporeal beings, has not within itself its own sufficient reason for what it is, then it must have for its cause a primary and universal mover of corporeal and incorporeal beings. Therefore, this cause must be a prime mover, superior to all motion, of a much higher order, and for this reason the *cause* is said to be *equivocal* and not univocal.

6) Finally, we must distinguish between *the proper cause* and *becoming, i. e.,* the apparition of such and such an individual effect; also, between the *proper* cause of the *being itself* and the conservation of this effect.[3] According to Aristotle's example, the builder is the proper cause of the *construction* of the house, and if he stops working before the house is completed, the house is no longer in course of construction; but he is not the proper cause of the *being* of this house; if he dies, the house will not cease to exist. Likewise, the son survives his father; the heat of the sun is necessary, not only for the generation of plants and animals, but also for their preservation. Hence, universal and higher causes are not only productive, but likewise preservative of their effects. Their causality is permanent, always in act, and we affirm the same of God's causality.

This notion of proper cause illuminates the Thomistic proofs for the existence of God, so that we can perceive the connection between them.

In each of these *a posteriori proofs,* St. Thomas starts from a fact

[1] *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 104, a. x.
[2] Ia, q. 45, a. 5.
[3] Ia, q. 104, a. 1.

known as certain from experience, and from a rational principle, which is necessary and evident, he proves the existence of God, the proper and universal cause of the universal effects which originate from Him. *"Oportet enim universaliores eÿectus in universaliores et priores causas reducere"* (for the more universal effects must be reduced to more universal and prior causes).[4]

The order of these five proofs corresponds to the natural process of the reasoning mind. In fact, St. Thomas begins with the most evident signs of the contingency of earthly things, such as motion, and then goes on to consider those which bear a deeper significance, such as the imperfection and the orderly arrangement of composite things. Likewise, in order to arrive at the conclusion of his proofs, he shows step by step the necessary existence and absolute transcendence of the First Cause, so as to make it evident that this cause is essentially distinct from the world, which is changeable, composite, and imperfect, and that the name of God can be given to it. In fact, what people generally understand by this name is the prime mover, the first cause, the necessary and supreme being, who has created and ordained the whole universe.

All these arguments can be summed up in a more general one, based on the principle of causality, which may be stated as follows: That which does not exist by itself, can exist only by another, which is self-existent. Now, experience shows that there are beings endowed with activity, life, and intelligence, which do not exist of and by themselves, since they are born and die. Therefore, they received their existence from another, who must be existence, life, and intelligence itself. If such were not the case, we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, the higher form of life from the lower, and that the plurality of beings comes from a primary being less perfect than all the others taken together.

First Proof: From Motion

That there is motion in the world is a certainty attested by experience. There is not merely local motion, but there are also substantial changes, qualitative movements according to the increasing or de-

4 Ia, q. 45, a. 5.

creasing intensity of a quality, and even spiritual movements of the intellect and will.[8]

Notv, everything which is in motion is moved by another. This principle is a necessary and absolutely universal one. Motion, in fact, is the transition from potentiality to act, from indetermination to determination. Thus a body which was cold becomes warm, an inert body is moved locally. Now, nothing can be reduced from potentiality to act, except by a *being* which is already in act, and it is impossible for a being to be at one and the same time and in identically the same sense, both in potentiality and in act. In living beings, one part is moved by another; but as this other part is itself set in motion by a movement of a different order, this can only be the result of the influence exerted upon it by a mover of a higher order. Therefore, every being that is in motion, body, soul, or spirit, is moved by another."

Moreover, there cannot be an infinite series of movers essentially and actually subordinated one to another. It is not a question here of *a* regressive series of movers, such as we find amongst generators in a series of animals generated; for these movers are but accidentally subordinated to one another, and none of them exerts an actual influence upon the other. Also, as St. Thomas says,[6] "it is not impossible for a man to be generated by a man *ab aeterno,* that is to say, without there having been a first in this series of human generations." But it is impossible for motion to find its completely sufficient reason or its first cause in a series of past movers, even if the series were *ab aeterno,* since each of these movers was himself set in motion by another. If this series is eternal, or had no beginning, it is eternally insufficient, for it has not in itself a sufficient reason for existing.

Therefore, we are dealing with movers which actually exert an influence upon one another and which are essentially subordinated one to the other. Thus the moon attracts the bodies which surround it, and is itself attracted by the earth; the earth in turn is attracted by the sun, and the sun has some other center of attraction. We cannot go on indefinitely in this ascending series. If, indeed, each of these

6 Ia, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2um; q. 79, a. 4; q. 82, a. 4, ad 311m; q. 105, a. 2, 3, 4, 5; Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4.

6 Cfr. *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 105, a. 5, where St. Thomas considers in inverse order how the prime mover is related to all motion and created activity.

7 Ia, q. 46, a. 2, ad yum.

movers essentially subordinated to one another, receives an impetus which it transmits to another, in such a manner that there is no prime mover which is the source of motion, which is itself not set in motion, then there never will be any motion. Thus a clock will not go without a spring, and multiplying the number of its movements *ad infinitum* would not give to it a principle of movement.

We must, therefore, conclude that there is a prime mover, who is not himself set in motion by a mover of a higher order, and whom we call God. This supreme mover is immobile, not with an immobility of an inferior kind, or the inertia of passive potency, which implies far more of imperfection than motion itself; but with an immobility of a nobler kind, namely, that of act, which has no need of being premoved or conditioned so that it may act. In other words, we must admit the existence of a prime mover, who acts by himself, who has never been reduced from potentiality to act, but who is *his own* activity, his own action,[8] and consequently, *his very own being, for* action presupposes being, and the mode of action follows the mode of being.[9]

The prime and most universal mover of bodies and of spirits must, therefore, be pure act, without any admixture of potentiality capable of further determination, and consequendy free from all imperfection, both with regard to action and with regard to being. In other words, it (or rather he) must be the self-subsisting Being.[10]

And so it is evident that this prime and immobile mover is transcendental, being by his very nature infinitely above the world of corporeal and incorporeal beings, which he moves incessantly.[11]

This argument refutes the theory of absolute Evolutionism, according to which *becoming,* or the *evolution* of phenomena, is the principle of all things. This is impossible, since the sufficient reason or cause of *becoming* cannot be found in this process itself, but *becoming* involves the presence of an additional element, which calls for a higher cause, otherwise we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, *being* from nothingness, without any cause. This would not only be a greater mystery than creation, but a manifest absurdity, which, as Hegel admits, must be acknowledged by

8 Ia, q. 3, a. 6; q. 9, a. 1; q. 25, a. 1, ad 3um; q. 54, a. I.
8 Ia, q. 25, a. 2.
10 Ia, q. 3, a. 4.
11 Ia, q. 3, a. 8.

all who believe in a progressive evolution, in the course of which the more perfect is always produced by the less perfect.

Second Proof: From Efficient Causes

We are not here concerned with movements or changes which happen in the world, but with efficient causes upon which depend such permanent beings as plants, animals, and men. In other words, this proof does not start precisely from the principle of motion or from *becoming,* but from *being,* which is the terminus of *becoming,* and leads us to admit the existence of a first efficient cause, which is necessary not only for the production of all things, but also for their preservation in existence.[12]

In the world there are efficient causes which are essentially subordinated to one another, e. g., all those cosmic influences, such as the chemical action in the air, atmospheric pressure, solar heat, etc., which are necessary not only for the production, but also for the preservation of plants and animals. Thus the ancient philosophers used to say that "man and the sun cooperate in the generation of man," for the sun is necessary both for the production and the preservation of vegetable and animal life on this earth of ours.

Now, these efficient causes, which are thus subordinated to one another, presuppose a first cause which is not caused. On the one hand, it is impossible for a being to cause itself, for in drat case it would exist before it actually did exist; on the other hand, it is impossible to proceed *ad infinitum* in a series of essentially subordinated causes, as we have seen above (first proof).

Hence, there exists, above the caused efficient causes, *a first cause which is not caused,* which has *being* from itself, not from another. This first cause must, therefore, be *Being itself* (a point which will be more clearly understood at the close of the next proof) and may justly be called God.[13]

Third Proof: From the Contingency of Beings in the World

There are beings in the world which are evidently contingent, that is to say, they can exist or not exist. Thus plants and animals live

12 To understand this demonstration fully, consult the *Summa* of St. Thomas, la, q. 104, a. I and 2.

13 la, q. 3, a. 4.

and die, and science assures us that there was a time when there were neither plants nor animals, nor men on this earth, and when the stars were not as they are to-day, but in a nebulous state.

Nou>, contingent beings presuppose a necessary and self-existing being. What is contingent has not its own *raison d'être* within itself, nor is it the cause of its own existence. Therefore, there must be some necessary *being.* Moreover, if the necessity of this *being* or principle is merely relative (for instance, limited from the physical point of view, so as to account for rhe physico-chemical phenomena of the lower order), then we must continue our inquiry, until we arrive at an *absolutely necessary being; for,* as we have seen, we cannot proceed *ad infinitum* in a series of causes which are essentially subordinated one to another. Consequently, there must be an absolutely necessary Being, the cause of all the others.[14]

a) *This necessary Being is not the sum-total of contingent beings,* even if this series were infinite in space and time; for we may go on increasing the number of contingent beings, but they will always be contingent, and can no more constitute a necessary being, than a countless number of idiots can constitute an intelligent man.

b) *Neither is the necessary Being the law of contingent beings,* since this law depends *for* its existence upon the existence of contingent beings.

c) Finally, the necessary Being is not a substance common to all phenomena; for this substance would be subject to motion (see First Proof), and would receive determinations or new perfections, which it could not have produced itself, since the greater cannot come from the less. The necessary Being can certainly give, but it cannot receive; it can determine, but it cannot be determined. It has of itself and from all eternity, all that it can have.[15]

Moreover, from the fact that the necessary Being is *self-existent,* it follows that its essence is not merely a capacity to exist—which capacity receives and limits existence—but it is unreceived or subsistent existence, self-subsisting Being.[15]

14 Ia, q. *44,* a. 1.
16 Ia, q. 3, a. 6.
10 Ia, q. 3, a. *4;* q. 7, a. I

Fourth Proof: From the Degrees of Perfection in Beings

The special feature of this proof is the perfection of the First Cause. It runs as follows: *The beings in this world form a hierarchy: some of them are more perfect than others,* in passing through the various degrees of the vegetative and sensitive life, from the stone up to man. All beings have their perfection or goodness, but the word *good* denotes merely a similitude or analogy in such phrases as: a good stone, a good fruit, a good house, a good master, a thoroughly good man. In like manner, unity is of various degrees, and the unity of the soul excels that of the body. Thus, also, there is a greater degree of truth in principles than in conclusions, and in necessary propositions than in those that are contingent.

Now, we speak of different things as more or less perfect, according to the varying degrees in which they approach that which is the most perfect, and the cause of the others.* In fact, as St. Thomas points out,[17] "whatever belongs to a thing by its very nature, and has not been caused in it, cannot belong to it in an imperfect manner." A *being* which has but imperfect goodness does not possess this quality of and by itself; for if *the goodness* were not *caused* in it, it would demand such limitation by and of itself, and at the same time it would *not* demand such limitation by and of itself, since it is not limited in the same manner. In other words, *every imperfect being is caused,* because it is *composite, mixed,* and the perfection which it contains is mingled with imperfection. Now, as St. Thomas says, "things which are in themselves different cannot unite, unless something causes them to unite."[18] Thus, existence, perfection, and beauty, are limited in different ways in plants, in animals, and in man. Of themselves they do not imply this or that particular limitation, and in their formal concepts they do not even imply any limitation. Therefore, in all these imperfect beings, existence, perfection, and beauty are the effects of a *Supreme Cause,* which must be *absolutely perfect, free from all imperfection,* and *absolutely simple.* Moreover, this Cause must be a *self-subsisting Being, unlimited, infinitely perfect, i. e., Goodness, Truth, and Beauty itself.* Hence it follows that this Supreme Being is absolutely

17 C. *Gentes,* Bk. II, ch. 15.
18 Summa Theol., la, q. 3, a. 7.

transcendental, really and essentially distinct from the world, which is always composite and imperfect.[19]

This proof clearly differs from that of St. Anselm, since it does not start from the *notion* of the supremely perfect Being, but from the actual existence of various degrees of perfection in things. Thus it ascends by way of causality to the absolutely perfect Being, because no imperfect *being* can have its *raison d'etre* in itself.

It is by this demonstration that St. Thomas establishes the existence of intelligence,[20] of truth,[21] of goodness,[22]*and of the natural law.[23]

Fifth Proof: From the Order Prevailing in the Universe

We observe that irrational beings act for an end. Indeed, we notice that there is a wonderful order prevailing in the regular courses of the heavenly bodies. The centripetal and centrifugal forces are so regulated that the heavenly bodies move in their orbits with enormous speed and in perfect harmony. No less striking are the unity and variety which we behold in the organic structures of plants, animals, and man. Finality, or the relation to an end, is clearly seen in the evolution of an egg, which virtually contains a certain determined organism, and in the case of those organs which are adapted to certain very special functions, such as the eye, which is for seeing, and the ear, which is for hearing. Finally, we find the same to be the case with those animals which act by instinct, for instance, the bee, which builds its hive.

What particularly manifests this finality, as St. Thomas notes, is the fact that natural agents of the irrational order "always or nearly always act in the same way, and in a way designed to obtain that which best agrees with their nature," *e. g.,* for their development, nutrition, reproduction, etc.[24]*

19 Ibid., la, q. 3, a. 4 and 8; q. 7, a. 1 etc.

20 Ibid., la, q. 79, a. 4.

21 C. Gentes, Bk. II, c. 84.

22 Summa Theol., la Hac, q. 2, a. 7 and 8.

22 la Ilae, q. 91, a. 2.

24 "We see things which lack intelligence, such as material bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best. Whence it is plain that they achieve their end not fortuitously, but designedly. Now, whatever lacks intelligence, cannot tend towards

This terminus of their action, precisely because it is something determinate a<nd in complete conformity with their nature, is entitled to the name °f *end; for* the end is the good in view of which an agent acts.

Moreover, even before the existence of God has been proved, the necessity anti universality of the principle of finality are evident truths. The principle may be expressed by the following formula: *"Every agent acts for an end."* "Were it otherwise," says St. Thomas, "one thing v/oukl not follow from the action of the agent more than another, excc/Pt by chance. . . . For the natural agent to produce an effect wD'ch is determinate, it must be determined for some particular effect, and this is what is meant by the word *end."* 26

It will not do to have recourse to chance, for *chance* is an accidental cause *(causa per accidens'),* and hence is not the cause of what happen5 always and according to nature. Otherwise, the accidental woulc^ no longer be accidental; instead of being something which accrues *(accidit)* to the essence, it would be its foundation, and in that </a5e tbe essential would be subordinate to the accidental, which is absv*rcl· The wonderful order existing in the universe would be the result °f no order, the greater would proceed from the less.

Neither u)dl it do to appeal solely to the efficient cause, and to reject the final cause. For in that case we could not give any reason for the actio|l °f an agent: why, for instance, a certain organ has a certain detcrm*nate tendency; nor could we say why an agent acts instead °f not acting. There would be no *raison d'être for* the action. The active potency or the inclination of the agent is not without a m^llve› called *tendency,* because it *tends* essentially towards something, just as the imperfect tends towards the perfect. *"Potentia dicitur ad adtum"* potency essentially refers to act, or is essentially of the intentional order. For instance, the faculty of sight is expressly designed for seeing.20

Therefore, we cannot doubt the *existence of finality* in the world,

an end, unless ** be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; just a# the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore, some intelligent being exists, by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we God. (la, q. 2, a. 3).

20 *Summa fheol.,* la, q. 44, a. 4; la Ilae, q. 1, a. 2; *C. Gentes,* Bk. III, c. 2.

20 See Aristide. *Physics,* Bk. II, c. 8 ff., and the Commentary of St. Thomas, lect. 7-14.

the wonderful order of which is nothing else but the suitable arrangement of means in view of an end *(apta dispositio mediorum ad finem').* The bird flies not only *because* it has wings (efficient cause), but the wings are for the purpose of flying (final cause). Otherwise, the particular formation of its wings would be without a sufficient reason. To affirm that anything is without a sufficient reason, is to formulate a proposition which is unintelligible and absurd (see *supra,* n. 24). St. Thomas would have said: "It would be foolish to make such an assertion," just as he said that "David of Dinant foolishly declared God to be prime matter." [27] According to the philosophical acceptation of the word *stultitia,* namely, the opposite of wisdom, there is nothing more foolish than Materialism or Mechanism.

Now, *irrational beings cannot tend towards an end, unless they are directed by an intelligence,* as the arrow is shot to the mark by the archer. In fact, one thing cannot be *directed* to another, unless there is a *directing cause,* which must, of necessity, be intelligent, for, *"sapientis est ordinare."* Why? Because an intelligent being alone perceives the *raison d'etre* of things, and the end is the *raison d'etre* of the means. "Irrational beings," says St. Thomas, "tend towards an end by natural inclination; they are, as it were, moved by another and not by themselves, since they have no knowledge of the end as such." [28] Animals have a sensitive knowledge of the thing which constitutes their end, but they do not perceive the formal end as such in this thing. If, therefore, there were no intelligent designer directing the world, the order and intelligibility existing in things, which science reveals to us, would be the effect of an unintelligible cause, and, in addition to this, our own intelligences would originate from a blind and unintelligent cause, and again we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, which is absurd.

There is, therefore, a *supreme intelligent Being,* who directs all things to their respective ends. It will not do to say that the universal Designer has, like ourselves, an *intellectual jaculty directed to* intelligible being, but what is demanded is a designing intelligence of a higher order. The supreme Designer cannot be designed for any

27 *Summa Theol.,* Ia, q. 3, a. 8.
28 Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2.

other purpose. He must be Thought itself, self-subsisting Intellection, just as he is self-subsisting Being: *"ipsum intelligere subsistens."* [29]

The One End to Which All Five Proofs Converge

We have pointed out that the result of each of these five demonstrations is to move us to admit the existence of a divine attribute which can be predicated only of the self-subsisting Being, as St. Thomas explicitly proves.[80] The article referred to serves the double purpose of pointing out to us what is the terminus in the ascending process of reason, which rises from sensible things until it reaches the supreme cause, and it is also the principle in the descending or synthetic process, by which reason deduces the divine attributes of the one who is Being itself, and judges of all things by the highest cause. These two inverse methods are called by St. Thomas, respectively, *via inventionis* and *via judicii?*[1]

In fact, as we have seen, the prime and universal mover must be his own action *(suum agere),* and, therefore, his own existence *(suum esse),* and the same must be said of the first uncaused cause, of the necessary being, of the sovereignly perfect being, and of the ruler of the universe. Thus the *supreme truth* of Christian philosophy, or the *fundamental truth in the synthetical order (in via judicii)* is *that in God alone essence and existence are identical.* God is *"He who is"* (Ex. Ill, 14).

Such are the five metaphysical proofs for the existence of God, to which all others can be easily reduced. If we study them carefully, we see, contrary to the assertions of modern Agnostics, that the existence of God, who is transcendental or distinct from the world, cannot be denied without denying the principle of causality, namely, that "every being which is mobile, contingent, composite, imperfect, and relative, is caused, and in its final analysis requires a primary and immovable being, one which is absolutely simple, perfect, and intelligent." Now, the principle of causality cannot be denied or doubted without denying or doubting the *principle of contradiction,* for "a contingent and uncaused being" would exist neither of itself,

29 Ia, q. 3, a. 4; q. 14, a. I and 4.
80 Ia, q. 3, a. 4.
81 Ia> q· 79> a. 9·

nor by reason of another, and consequently, could not be distinguished from nothingness, since it would exist without a sufficient *muon d'etre,* either intrinsic or extrinsic. This would mean the subvu sion of the principle of contradiction, that "being is not non-being," and of the principle of identity, that "being is being, non-being is non-being," and human reason would be lost in absurdity.

If, on the contrary, the principle of contradiction or identity is the supreme law of reality and of our reason, then the supreme reality must indeed be the identity of essence and existence, or self-subsisting Being *{ipsum esse subsistens).* Thus the five ways which lea.l to the existence of God, unite in the opposition prevailing between the *principle of identity* and the *changeableness and composition of the world,* or the lack of identity displayed in the latter, b'l'om this opposition it is at once evident that the world is contingent and depends upon the immutable and pre-eminently simple Being whose name, as given to Moses, "I am who am," denotes absolute identity.

l Icnce, the ancient philosophers used to say that our intellect knows God in the mirror of sensible things, by means of the broken ray of light reflected from rational principles. The principle of identity or of contradiction shows the contingency of this mirror and is reflected in the image of the principle of causality, which manifests to us the existence of the supreme Being.

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to choose between the existence of the true God, transcendental or distinct from the world, and the Hegelian denial of the principle of contradiction as the law of reality. In other words, we must choose between Theism and Atheistic Evolutionism, which latter maintains that the more perfect comes from the less perfect, and that contradictories are identified in a universal process of *becoming.* Thus we sec in absolute Evolutionism an *incontestable proof by the reductio ad absurdum* of the existence of the true and transcendental God, since this existence cannot be denied without at the same time denying the validity of the principle of contradiction, and without positing a fundamental absurdity at the root of all things.

This radical absurdity is expressed in the first of the propositions condemned in the Syllabus of Pius IX, which reads as follows: "There is no supreme Being, who is all-wise, ruler of the universe,

and distinct from it; God is identical with the nature of things, and is, therefore, subject to changes; God really becomes or begins to be in man and in the world, and all things are God and have the same substance with Him; thus God and the world, spirit and matter, necessity and liberty, truth and falsehood, goodness and evil, justice and injustice are all identified in the one same and only reality." [32]

To avoid this manifest absurdity, we must affirm the *existence of God,* who, according to the Vatican Council, "being one, sole, *absolutely* simple [88] and immutable [83] spiritual substance, is to be declared as *really and essentially distinct from the world,* of supreme beatitude in and from Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things which exist or can be conceived beside Himself." [88]

83 Denzinger, *Enchiridion,* n. 1701.
38 See the fourth and fifth proofs of St. Thomas for the existence of God.
84 Sec the first, second, and third proofs of St. Thomas.
88 Denzinger, *Enchiridion,* n. 1782.